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Early Church Classics

THE EPISTLES
OF
ST. IGNATIUS
Vol. I.

REV. J. H. STRAWLEY

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Early Church Classics.

THE EPISTLES OF S T. I G N A T I U S, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH.

BY THE
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'There's no lack, neither, of God's saints and kings,
That shake the ashes of the grave aside
From their calm locks, and undiscomfited
Look stedfast truths against Time's changing mask.'

E. B. B.

PREFACE

THE present translation of the epistles of St. Ignatius is intended to set before English readers, in an accessible form, the writings of one of the most important characters in the Church history of the period succeeding the age of the Apostles. In these epistles we have the key to the right understanding of the character of the Church at the beginning of the second century. The two facts to which they bear witness are, on the one hand, the significance of the Incarnation for Christians of that generation as the central truth of Christianity, and, on the other, the importance attached to the visible unity of the Church as expressed in the organization of the Christian societies under bishops, presbyters and deacons. The striking personality of the writer of the epistles, and the controversy which has gathered round them, combine to make them one of the most interesting products of early Christian times.

Bishop Lightfoot's great work (*Ignatius and Polycarp*, 1885) has exhaustively treated of most of the critical questions which are connected with the text and the exposition of the epistles. The present writer has made that work his chief guide, and has rarely ventured, in the interpretation of passages, to depart from the views

expressed in it. On the nature of the heresies attacked in the epistles, however, he has adopted in the main the conclusions of Dr. Hort in his *Judaistic Christianity*. The articles on Ignatius by Dr. Harnack in the *Expositor* for 1885 and 1886, as well as the same writer's treatment of the epistles in his *Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, have also been consulted. The notes of Zahn on the epistles have supplied much useful matter, while for the external history of the period Professor Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire* has been found invaluable. In treating of the theology of Ignatius the writer has found much that is suggestive in the able monograph of Von der Goltz (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd. xii.), although he has not always been able to subscribe to the author's conclusions.

The writer is indebted to Dr. Swete, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, for much kind advice ungrudgingly given ; to the committee of the S.P.C.K. for the interest they have shown in the work, and for some useful criticisms ; to the Rev. W. L. E. Parsons, of Selwyn College, who has read through the translation, and to others.

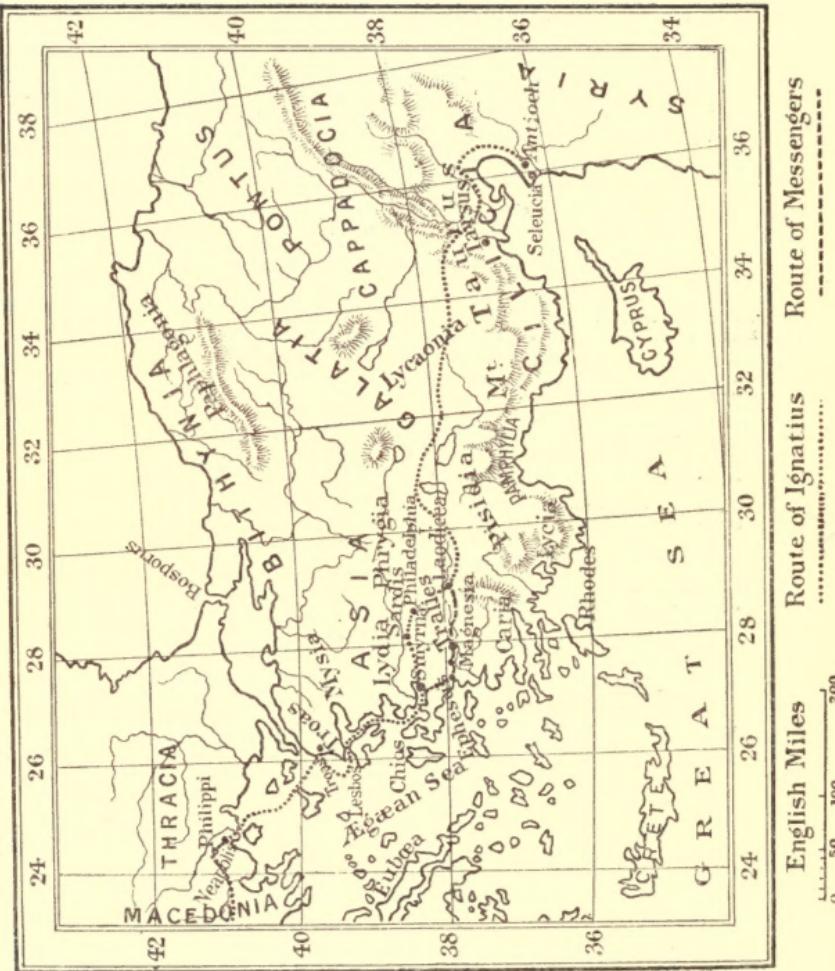
NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A few slight changes and additions have been made both in the introduction and in the notes ; but in its main features the present edition is a reprint of the former.

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ST. IGNATIUS

INTRODUCTION.

I. THE LITERARY CONTROVERSY UPON THE IGNATIAN EPISTLES.

AROUND the letters bearing the name of St. Ignatius there has been waged a literary controversy that has extended from the time of the revival of learning to the present century. The subject is of special interest to Englishmen, as the discussion of the genuineness of these letters found a place in the religious controversies of England in the seventeenth century, and the decision of the question has on three occasions been associated with the names of English scholars, *i.e.* Archbishop Ussher and Bishop Pearson in the seventeenth century, and Bishop Lightfoot in the nineteenth century. During the Middle Ages there were current in Europe seventeen letters connected with the name of St. Ignatius. Four of these embrace the spurious correspondence with St. John and the Virgin. They include—

- (i) Two letters from Ignatius to St. John.
- (ii) A letter from Ignatius to the Virgin.
- (iii) A letter from the Virgin to Ignatius.

The letters only exist in Latin, and were most pro-

bably composed in that language. An attempt has been made to claim the authority of St. Bernard in support of their genuineness, because in one of his sermons he says that Ignatius ‘saluteth a certain Mary in several epistles, which he wrote to her, as Christ-bearer.’ But the word *quandam*,¹ ‘a certain (one),’ shows that he is speaking of some less famous person than the Virgin, the reference being, doubtless, to Mary of Cassobola, to whom one of the letters of the Long Form is addressed. As the object of the forger was undoubtedly to do honour to the Virgin, Lightfoot is inclined to connect the letters with the outburst of Mariolatry which took place in the eleventh and following centuries. The forgery was speedily disposed of as soon as the revival of the study of antiquity began.

The remaining thirteen epistles, known as the Longer Form, include a longer version of the seven letters of the present collection, together with six additional letters, *i. e.* Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius, Ignatius to Mary of Cassobola, to the Tarsians, to the Philippians, to the Antiochenes, and to Hero. This Longer Form is contained in several Greek MSS. and also in a Latin version of which the MSS. are numerous. The six additional letters are also found attached to the seven letters of the present collection not only in the Greek MSS., but also in the Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Coptic translations. The Latin version was printed in 1498, and was followed in 1557 by the publication of the Greek text. Neither of these editions contained the letter of Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius, which appeared, however, in subsequent editions.

¹ The omission of this word in some MSS. assisted the misconception of the passage. But there is no doubt that it forms a part of the true text.

It was not long before the suspicions of students were aroused. They could not fail to be struck by the wide divergence of the text of Ignatius in the current editions from the quotations of early Christian writers, such as Eusebius (c. A.D. 310—325) and Theodoret (A.D. 446). It was noticed further that Eusebius only makes mention of seven letters, and that no others but these are referred to by Christian writers for some considerable period after the time of Eusebius. Internal evidence confirmed these suspicions by pointing out obvious anachronisms and mistakes in the letters. At the same time the prejudices of Protestant writers, and especially of those who favoured Presbyterian views, were excited against the letters, because their presentation of Church order conflicted with their own views. On the one hand it was recognized by the Jesuit Petavius, that the epistles were interpolated, and on the other hand many Protestant writers were prepared to believe that they included some genuine letters of Ignatius. Vedelius, a professor at Geneva, published an edition of the letters in 1623, in which he attempted to separate the genuine from the spurious letters. The seven letters mentioned by Eusebius were placed in one class, and the remaining five, which he regarded as spurious, were formed into a second class. He also maintained that the seven letters contained interpolations, and in proof of this he showed that the interpolator had made use of extracts from the Apostolical Constitutions.

The genuineness of the Long Form was commonly accepted by English writers of eminence before Ussher's time, and we find the letters in that form quoted by Hooker and Bishop Andrewes. The question, however, was prominently brought forward by the controversies of the day. Episcopacy was being vehemently attacked by

the Puritans. This attack reached its climax in the famous Smectymnuus controversy (so called from the initials of the names of the five Presbyterian divines), in which Bishop Hall defended, and the Presbyterians attacked the government of the Church by bishops. In this controversy Ussher was induced to take a part. In his pamphlet *The Original of Bishops and Metropolitans*, he made use of the evidence of the Ignatian epistles, carefully confining, however, his quotations to the passages in which the interpolated version agrees with the genuine text. Ussher's pamphlet was replied to by the poet Milton in his treatise *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, published in 1641. He attacks the genuineness of the Ignatian epistles and says, 'To what end then should they cite him as authentic for episcopacy, when they cannot know what is authentic of him?' But Ussher had already engaged in the task of rescuing the genuine epistles from the interpolated and spurious additions of the current text. He had examined the quotations of Ignatius found in the writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (c. A.D. 1250), and two other English writers, John Tyssington and William Wodeford, who wrote in the fourteenth century and were members of the Franciscan house at Oxford, to which Grosseteste left his books. These quotations, he found, differed from the common text of Ignatius and agreed with the quotations found in Eusebius and Theodoret. This led him to conclude that there might exist somewhere in England manuscripts containing this purer text of the epistles. The result was the discovery of two Latin MSS. of the epistles. The first of these was found in the library of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. This MS., of which Ussher procured a transcript, was written by Walter Crome, D.D., a former Fellow, being completed

in the year 1441, as we learn from a note in Crome's own handwriting, while another note in the same hand on a fly-leaf states that the MS. was presented to the College in A.D. 1444 'on the feast of St. Hugh.'

The second MS. came from the library of Richard Montague or Montacute, Bishop of Norwich. It has, however, disappeared since Ussher's time, although we possess a collation of its readings contained between the lines or in the margin of Ussher's transcript of the Caius MS. This transcript is now in the library of Dublin University.

Of these two MSS. the second appears to be the earlier and the more accurate. In fact Lightfoot thinks that it closely represents the version as it came from the translator. Ussher found that the quotations of Ignatius in the works of Grosseteste were taken from the Latin version preserved in these two MSS., and further study led him to believe that Grosseteste was himself the translator. Such a view is consistent with the interest shown by the great Bishop of Lincoln in Greek learning and in the translation of Greek authors. Moreover we know that among the books of which Grosseteste caused a translation to be made were the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. These appear frequently bound up in the same MS. as the Ignatian epistles. In recent times there has been more direct confirmation of Ussher's view. This is supplied by a note in a fourteenth-century MS. in the library at Tours, attributing the Latin translation to Grosseteste.

Ussher published his shorter Latin text in 1644. But as yet the Greek text corresponding to this shorter Latin version had not appeared. This link was supplied two years later by the publication at Amsterdam by Isaac Voss of the Greek text of six out of the seven letters, the

epistle to the Romans being missing. This Greek text was based upon an eleventh-century MS. in the Medicean library at Florence. Finally the Greek text of the missing epistle to the Romans was published by Ruinart in 1689 from a MS. of the tenth century, now in the National Library at Paris. The MS. contains the Greek Acts of the martyrdom of Ignatius, and the epistle to the Romans is incorporated in them. Ussher's labours thus enabled students to recognize the genuine epistles of Ignatius, and to separate from these the interpolated portions, as well as the spurious epistles, found in the Longer Form.

But the publication by Voss of the Greek text of the seven epistles led to a new controversy set on foot by the French Puritans, who attacked the epistles because of the support which they lent to episcopacy. The most formidable opponent was Daillé, whose work appeared in 1666. This new attack was concentrated upon the seven letters as published by Voss. The attack was met, and the genuineness of the letters vindicated by Bishop Pearson, who wrote his *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ* in 1672.

The next important date in the Ignatian controversy was the year 1845, when Canon Cureton published a Syriac version of the epistles to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans. The three epistles contained in this version appear in a much shorter form than is found in the Greek text and Latin version. A fragment of the epistle to the Trallians is incorporated in the epistle to the Romans, but none of the other epistles appear in the collection. The text of Cureton's edition was based upon two MSS. in the British Museum. The former of these two MSS. dates from the sixth century. It was purchased by Archdeacon Tattam from the convent of St. Mary Deipara in the Nitrian desert in

1839. The second MS. dates from the seventh or eighth century, and was brought from Egypt by Arch-deacon Tattam in 1842. Cureton maintained that these three epistles alone represented the genuine Ignatius, that the Vossian collection contained these three in an interpolated form, and that the remaining four letters of the Vossian collection were forgeries. This rekindled the controversy. Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, declared the newly-discovered version to be an epitome of the genuine letters made by an Eutychian heretic. This led Cureton to a fuller treatment of the question. He had meanwhile discovered an additional MS. of the three epistles, brought, like the first-named, from the convent of St. Mary Deipara, and dating from at least the ninth century. He now published his great work *Corpus Ignatianum* (London, 1849), which contains a full treatment of the whole question. Cureton's view was supported by Bunsen and several eminent scholars. But it has failed to hold its ground. Apart from the fact that the seven letters of the Vossian collection were plainly known to Eusebius and Theodoret, they exhibit a perfect unity of authorship and style throughout. Cureton's theory requires us to suppose that the interpolator was able to reproduce in his additions to the letters the most subtle characteristics of language and grammar. A similar difficulty occurs when we examine the relation of Cureton's Syriac version to the Syriac version of the seven letters. The one is plainly derived from the other, and it is far more probable that the Curetonian Syriac version is an abridged form of the Syriac version of the seven letters, than that the latter is an expansion of the former.

The works of Zahn (*Ignatius von Antiochien*, 1873) and of Bishop Lightfoot (*Apostolic Fathers*, Part II.,

Ignatius and Polycarp, 1885) have convincingly demonstrated the genuineness of the seven letters in the form edited by Voss, as against the claims of the Curetonian letters, and this conclusion has been generally accepted by modern scholars.

The author of the Long Form probably wrote in Syria in the latter half of the fourth century. He has been identified by Harnack and Funk with the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions (see Brightman, *Liturgies E. and W.*, p. xxvii f.). His slightly Arian tone suggests that he wished to present, in the name of a primitive father, a conciliatory statement of doctrine to which men of all parties might assent (Lightfoot).

The Curetonian Syriac version is probably due to the careless abridgment of the letters by some scribe, and represents 'neither epitome nor extract, but something between the two.'¹ Lightfoot is inclined to assign it to the sixth century.

2. GENUINENESS AND DATE.

'THERE are no epistles in early Christian literature whose existence receives such early and excellent attestation as does that of the Ignatian epistles from the epistle of Polycarp' (Harnack, *Chronologie*, p. 400). The epistle of *Polycarp to the Philippians* was written some few weeks after the letters of Ignatius, and before the news of the martyrdom of Ignatius had reached Smyrna. It contains two references to Ignatius (cc. 9, 13). In the latter passage the writer says: 'The letters of Ignatius sent to us by him, and all the rest which we had by us, we have sent to you, as you enjoined. They are attached to this letter.' This description corresponds with our

¹ Lightfoot, I. p. 325.

present collection. Two letters were addressed to Smyrna, one to the Church, the other to Polycarp. Four others were written from Smyrna. The bearer of the letter to the Philadelphians, which was written from Troas, would probably pass through Smyrna. Thus it would be possible for copies of all the letters to be in Polycarp's possession, and the interchange of letters, which was already common in the churches in St. Paul's day (Col. iv. 16), would render the request of the Philippians and Polycarp's compliance natural. See further, Lightfoot, vol. i. pp. 336, 423 f.

St. Irenæus (c. 180 A.D.) quotes from Rom. 4. See v. 28. 4: 'As one of our own people said, when condemned to the wild beasts on account of his testimony towards GOD, "I am GOD'S grain, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread."

Lightfoot and Harnack both refer to passages in *Clement of Alexandria* (c. 190—210), which they think point to an acquaintance with these epistles.

Origen, before the middle of the third century, shows clearly a knowledge of these epistles and their author. Thus in *de Orat.* 20, he appropriates the language of Rom. 3: "Nothing that is visible is good." This, however, may have been a proverbial expression. But in two passages he claims to be quoting the very words of Ignatius—

(i) In the Prologue to the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (extant in the version of Rufinus) he says: 'I remember that some one of the saints, Ignatius by name, said of Christ, "My Love is crucified," nor do I think him deserving of censure for this.' See Rom. 7.

(ii) In *Hom. vi. in Lucam*, he quotes from Eph. 19,

introducing the quotation by a reference to the letters and their author. His words are: 'Well is it written in one of the letters of a certain martyr, Ignatius I mean, who was second bishop of Antioch after the blessed Peter, and who in the persecution fought with wild beasts at Rome.' Then follow the words, 'Hidden from the prince of this world was the virginity of Mary' (Eph. 19). Origen thus clearly knew that—

- (i) Ignatius was second bishop of Antioch.
- (ii) He suffered martyrdom at Rome.
- (iii) He wrote some epistles which were extant in Origen's time.

Eusebius of Cæsarea (c. 310—325) in his *Chronicle* states that Ignatius was second bishop of Antioch, and was martyred in the reign of Trajan. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (iii. 22, 36) he shows an exact and detailed knowledge of Ignatius, his journey, his letters, the churches to which he wrote, and the tradition of his martyrdom at Rome. He also quotes from the epistles to the Romans and Smyrnæans, and elsewhere (*Quæst. ad Stephan.* i.) from Ephesians.

From the time of Eusebius there is full and varied evidence of the existence of the letters. The Syriac Version was in existence at the close of the fourth century, and an Armenian Version, translated from the Syriac, in the fifth century or rather later.

Internally the letters bear clear evidence of the early date at which they were written.

1. The heresies attacked show plainly that the author had not in view the great Gnostic sects connected with Marcion, Basilides, or Valentinus. He shows no sign of attacking their distinctive systems, but on the contrary uses in certain places language which would have been unguarded and liable to be misunderstood if used by a

later writer. See esp. Magn. 8 (note). In that passage, before the correct reading was pointed out, it was urged that Ignatius was attacking the Valentinian teaching upon Σιγή or 'Silence.' The true reading disposes of that view, but uses language which no orthodox writer would have ventured upon, if living at a time when the Valentinian heresy was rife. On the early nature of the heresies attacked, see Add. Note 1, vol. ii. These facts point to a date earlier than A.D. 140.

2. In several passages Ignatius appears to be repeating stereotyped expressions drawn from the Church tradition of his time. Whether they are derived from simple liturgical forms or Church teaching it is difficult to say. Harnack has drawn attention to them in an article in the *Expositor* for December 1885. Many of these creed-like passages exhibit in their form great antiquity. Thus the words, 'of the race (or seed) of David' (Eph. 18, 20, Trall. 9, Rom. 7, Smyrn. 1), the mention (Smyrn. 1) of 'Herod the tetrarch' side by side with Pontius Pilate (cf. Acts iv. 27, also Justin, *Dial.* 103, but absent from later writers), the inclusion of the baptism of Jesus by John (Eph. 18, Smyrn. 1), when compared with the oldest form of the Apostles' Creed, from which these clauses are absent, point to a period quite early in the second century.

3. The reference to Christian institutions has been claimed in support of an early date. From Smyrn. 8 Lightfoot concludes that the Eucharist still formed a part of the Agape (see notes). Justin speaks of the two as separate (*Apol.* i. 65, 67). Pliny's letter to Trajan (A.D. 112) points to the suspicion with which these celebrations were regarded, and Lightfoot argues that the connection of the Agape and Eucharist cannot have long survived that date.

4. The relation of these epistles to the books of the New Testament is a further indication of their early date. The manner in which the Gospel facts and sayings are quoted points to an early period at which the written Gospels had not attained the unique pre-eminence held by them later on in the second century. There is no reference in the epistles to written Gospels, and in one case the author quotes from an extra-canonical source. See Smyrn. 3. This would show that oral tradition was still appealed to.

The objections to the genuineness of these epistles have centred mainly round their presentation of Church government and their witness to episcopacy. But the organization, as here presented, while it exhibits monarchical episcopacy as fully established, and regards the bishop as the source of all ministerial authority,¹ also shows indications of its early date.

1. The picture presented of the bishop points to an early period when the area over which he exercised his rule was the congregation rather than the diocese, and when he was 'the pastor of a flock, like the vicar of a modern town, in intimate relations with all his people.'² Hence too we find that the body of presbyters are in immediate and regular contact with him and assist him as a 'council'³ in the work of administration.

2. A study of the types of authority to which Ignatius likens the authority of the bishop and the presbyters also affords an indication of early date. The fact that he regards the bishop as the representative of the Lord, while the presbyters represent the Apostles, indicates that he is writing at a time when the memory of the

¹ Smyrn. 8.

² Gore, *Church and Ministry*, p. 104.

³ Magn. 6, Trall. 3, Philad. 8.

Lord's earthly life was fresh in the minds of men. In the bishop's office he sees a type of authority like that which was in the world when Christ went about in His ministry attended by the Apostles.

3. Had these epistles been forged in the latter half of the second century, as Renan supposed, we should have expected them to reflect the conception of the ministry which is prominent in Christian writings of that period. Now in the writers of the latter half of the second century we find the bishops continually appealed to as the depositaries of Apostolic tradition. The bishops have received from the Apostles 'the gift of truth.' This conception is found in the Clementine writings, in Hegesippus and in Irenæus. But it is not the conception upon which the Ignatian epistles dwell. Yet if these letters had been written in the latter half of the second century it is unlikely that his language would have shown so little trace of the ideas current at that time.

The other objections urged on the ground of supposed anachronisms, such as the word 'leopard' (Rom. 5) and the phrase 'Catholic Church' (Smyrn. 8), are dealt with in the notes.

Each of the letters exhibits the same clearly marked individuality, and is connected by close and subtle links with the others. The Epistle to the Romans, however, stands apart from the others. It is of a purely personal character and deals with his coming martyrdom. Hence it contains no allusion to the subjects which occupy so large an amount of attention in other epistles, viz. Church order and heresy. Its silence on these points is of value in refuting the idea that the letters are a late forgery having as their object the promotion of Episcopacy. On that assumption it is difficult to see why the

letter should have been included in a collection having such an object. To escape this difficulty Renan admitted the genuineness of the Epistle to the Romans. But in its style the epistle shows clear traces of the same authorship as the others, and it is impossible to separate them.

The epistles present a striking and original personality, surpassing in interest that of any other of the so-called Apostolic Fathers. The creation of such a character would have been a literary feat quite beyond the reach of a forger in the second or any following century.

The year of the martyrdom of Ignatius can only be fixed within rough limits. Eusebius, as we have seen, states that Ignatius was martyred in the time of Trajan. Origen's statement that he was second bishop of Antioch and fought with wild beasts at Rome 'during the persecution,' probably shows that he was acquainted with the same tradition and refers to the persecution under Trajan, for, as Harnack has shown (*Chronologie*, p. 404), the date of the second bishop of Antioch cannot well be much later than that of the second bishop of Jerusalem, Simeon, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98—117).

Harnack finds another indication of the date in the relations of Ignatius to Polycarp. In the epistle addressed to the latter, Ignatius plainly shows that he is writing to one who is a comparatively young man. At the time of his death Polycarp's age was eighty-six (*Mart. Polyc.* 9). This was in A.D. 155–6, and Polycarp would be between forty and fifty between A.D. 110—120.

Hence the date of the letters and the martyrdom may be fixed between A.D. 110—117.

3. ST. IGNATIUS THE MARTYR.

OF the author of these epistles we possess little reliable information beyond what may be gathered from the epistles themselves. The Italian name Ignatius combined with the Greek title Theophorus may indicate, as Professor Ramsay¹ suggests, that 'he belonged to a Syrian family, strongly affected by Western civilization, which had discarded native names.' It is clear from the nature of his punishment that he cannot have been a Roman citizen, in which case he would have been sent, like St. Paul, to Rome for trial, and, if condemned, would have been beheaded. From the scattered hints which the letters give, *e. g.* Rom. 9, 'born out of due time,' and the expression, 'last (of all),' found in Eph. 21, Trall. 13, Smyrn. 11, we may conclude that his conversion was late in life. From Origen and Eusebius (see preceding section) we have learnt that he was second bishop of Antioch, being preceded by Euodius, and that he suffered martyrdom in the time of Trajan. The Acts recording his martyrdom exist in two forms, the Antiochene and Roman Acts, but both are quite late and untrustworthy. With their rejection we are left without any knowledge of the circumstances of his trial and condemnation, and the oft-quoted interview with Trajan becomes destitute of authority. From the epistles themselves we infer that Ignatius, like other martyrs before him (Eph. 12), who had been condemned to the beasts by the provincial governors, was being sent to Rome to suffer in the arena of the Coliseum. This great amphitheatre, built by the Flavian emperors, was the scene of these brutal sports on

¹ *Ch. in R. Empire*, p. 440, note.

a gigantic scale, and it is a well-attested fact that criminals from the provinces were used for this purpose.¹ From Polyc. *Phil.* 1, 9 we gather that other prisoners accompanied Ignatius, at least during a portion of his journey. His escort consisted of a maniple of soldiers, whom on account of their harsh treatment he compares to 'ten leopards' (Rom. 5). His letters reveal the true martyr-spirit. He declares that he is a willing victim.² His death will speak more clearly to the world than ever his words have done in life. 'If you be silent and leave me alone,' he writes to the Romans, 'I shall become a word of God, but, if you desire my flesh, then shall I be again a mere cry.'³ To the people of Smyrna he says, 'Near to the sword, near to God; in company with wild beasts, in company with God. Only let it be in the name of Jesus Christ, so that we may suffer together with Him.'⁴ 'It is,' he writes to Polycarp, 'the part of a great athlete to suffer blows and be victorious.'⁵ The route taken by his guards was probably overland by the Syrian and Cilician Gates to Smyrna, Troas, and Philippi, and thence to Rome. At some point in the journey the road branched in two directions, the southern route following the line of the great trade highway through Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus, while the more northern lay through Philadelphia and Sardis. The latter was the route followed by the Roman guards, and after a stay at Philadelphia (*Philad.* 1, 6, 7, 8), Ignatius reached Smyrna, where he was hospitably received by the Church and its bishop, Polycarp. Meanwhile messengers appear to have informed the churches lying on the southern route of the martyr's approaching visit to Smyrna, and accordingly delegates were sent to Smyrna to meet him from Ephesus,

¹ See Ramsay, *Ch. in R. Empire*, p. 317.

² Rom. 4. ³ Rom. 2. ⁴ Smyrn. 4.

⁵ Polyc. 3.

Magnesia, and Tralles. Their arrival appears to have greatly cheered Ignatius, and he accordingly addressed a letter to each of the churches from which they came, acknowledging their attentions and giving them practical counsel upon the dangers to which they were exposed.¹ At the same time he wrote a letter to the Church at Rome. The Roman Christians had heard of his journey from certain members of the Syrian church who had preceded him (*Rom.* 10), and he fears that some of their more influential members may exert themselves to procure a respite. He entreats them not to hinder him from ‘attaining unto God,’ and expresses in exuberant and passionate language his desire for martyrdom. The next halting-place at which we hear of him is Troas, from which he wrote the three remaining letters, to the Philadelphians, to the Smyrnaeans, and to Polycarp. All these letters were written after he had received the news that the persecution in Syria had ceased. He accordingly asks that delegates should be sent to Antioch with congratulations. From *Polyc.* 8 we learn that he was on the point of sailing to Neapolis. The next mention of him is in Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians (cc. 9, 13), in which he asks for tidings of Ignatius, who had passed through their city. Polycarp also states that he is sending them, at their request, a packet of the letters of Ignatius. This is the last we hear of him. His fame as a martyr spread through the East, and his letters were translated into Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic. Around his life and death there grew a wealth of legend. His name Theophorus gave rise to two such legends. One of these, not found before the end of the ninth century, evidently understands the name to mean ‘the God-

¹ On the heresies attacked, see Add. Note 1, vol. ii.

borne,' and represents Ignatius as the child whom our Lord took in His arms (Mark ix. 36, 37).

Another story, which comes from the Western Church and had a much more limited circulation, is founded upon the other sense of the name Theophorus, 'God-bearer.' It is narrated by Vincent of Beauvais, who tells us that 'when his heart was cut into small pieces, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was found inscribed in golden letters on every single piece, as we read; for he had said that he had Christ in his heart.'

Various traditions connect him with one or other of the Apostles. Theodoret speaks of him as having 'received the grace of the high-priesthood at the hand of the great Peter.' In the Apostolical Constitutions he is represented as having been ordained by St. Paul. The later and more widely-spread tradition represented him as a disciple of St. John.

A story is told us of the episcopate of Ignatius by the historian Socrates, who wrote c. A.D. 440. He narrates (H. E. vi. 8) how Ignatius 'saw a vision of angels, praising the Holy Trinity in antiphonal hymns, and left the fashion of his vision as a custom to the Church at Antioch.' Lightfoot thinks that this tradition may be traced to his language in such passages as Trall. 5, in which he speaks of his power to grasp heavenly things and the orders of angels, and also to his language in Eph. 4, Rom. 2, where he bids his readers form into a chorus and sing to the Father through Jesus Christ.

The Acts of his martyrdom¹ gave currency in East and West to the story of his interview with the Emperor Trajan, a story which, as we have seen, has no independent authority apart from the spurious Acts in which it is contained. The same Acts in like manner perpetuated

¹ On these Acts of the martyrdom, see Add. Note 3, vol. ii.

the varying traditions of East and West as to the disposal of the reliques. In the latter part of the fourth century his festival was kept in Syria and Greece on October 17, and the grave containing his reliques was shown in the Christian cemetery at Antioch. It was on one of these anniversaries that the great preacher, Chrysostom, while a presbyter at Antioch, delivered an oration on the martyr, in which he shows evident tokens of a belief in the translation of the reliques from Rome to Antioch. In the fifth century the reliques were transferred with great pomp, by order of the Emperor, the younger Theodosius, to the old Temple of Fortune, known henceforth as the Church of Ignatius. The date of his festival came to be transferred to December 20th, which was probably the date of the translation of the reliques to their new resting-place. In later times this anniversary was kept as a public festival at Antioch, and was celebrated with rites of great magnificence.

In the West, December 17th was at first kept as the day of the martyrdom, but finally this date was assigned to the translation of the reliques, and the festival of the martyrdom was kept on February 1st.

4. ST. IGNATIUS AS A TEACHER.

THE splendid example of the Christian martyr-spirit was not the only legacy of Ignatius to the Church. In the epistles which have come down to us he has presented to us the picture of a lofty, spiritual character, and has bequeathed to us a body of teaching, which has given him a foremost place among the ‘Apostolic Fathers.’

The doctrinal and controversial interest of his writings

must not be allowed to obscure the profoundly spiritual character which lies behind them. The letters abound in maxims and in passages of great spiritual beauty. They present to us a man, who has a keen insight into the practical significance of the Incarnation and the fresh, spiritual value which it has given to material things. He can say even of the simple events of daily life, ‘Those things which you do after the flesh are spiritual, for you do all things in Jesus Christ.’¹ Though he is the uncompromising champion of Church order and the ministry, we find him saying, ‘Let not office puff up any man, for faith and love are all in all.’² Amid all his insistence upon outward unity, he does not forget to remind us that the inner principle of union is God Himself.³ So again, he loves to dwell on the ‘silence’ of God’s working.⁴ To Ignatius, Christ and His Cross are all in all. In the Passion of Jesus Christ lies the power which draws his heart from all earthly longings.⁵ Hence his one aspiration, expressed again and again, is ‘that I may attain unto God.’ And yet throughout there breathes a deep spirit of humility. He is ‘one born out of due time,’⁶ ‘the last (of all).’⁷ Though at the close of a long career, he writes, ‘Now I am beginning to be a disciple.’⁸

His teaching reflects the natural character and circumstances of its author. Thus the deep vein of mysticism which pervades these letters may be partly due to the intense and fervid Oriental character of the writer. Again, the influences of heathen training show themselves to some degree in the form in which he apprehended Christianity. The idea of union with God, and the con-

¹ Eph. 8.

² Smyrn. 6.

³ Trall. 11.

⁴ Eph. 15, 19.

⁵ See Rom. 7.

⁶ Rom. 9.

⁷ Eph. 21, Trall. 13, Rom. 9.

⁸ Eph. 3.

ception of redemption as deliverance from death and the power of demons, present points of contact with the religious ideas of the heathen world, as we know it in the first and second centuries, and are such as would naturally attract a convert from heathenism. And further, if we could trust the later tradition, which is not impossible so far as dates are concerned (though worthless in itself), that St. John was the teacher of Ignatius, we should find a natural explanation of the close relationship between his thought and that of the Johannine writings.

As compared with later teaching, the theology of Ignatius, like that of the other 'Apostolic Fathers,' exhibits in some respects an immature and undeveloped character. It was only slowly that men came to sound the depths of the teaching of St. Paul and St. John, and to grasp the eternal relations of the truths revealed in time. Hence we find in Ignatius a use of doctrinal terms, which would have been avoided by the more exact theology of a later age. Instances are the phrases, 'the blood of God,'¹ 'the passion of my God,'² and the word 'unoriginate,'³ which, as applied to our Lord, might seem to deny the Eternal Generation. There is also an absence of any references to the work of the Son of God in the world before the Incarnation (except, perhaps, in Magn. 8), and of the doctrine of His agency in Creation such as we find in St. Paul. While Ignatius applies to Him the title 'Logos' or 'Word,'⁴ and elsewhere speaks of Him as 'the Mind of the Father,'⁵ and 'the unerring Mouth whereby the Father spake,'⁶ while, moreover, he asserts the Divine Sonship, and once uses the phrase, 'the Only Son,'⁷ yet he nowhere speaks of the eternal relations of this Divine Sonship to the

¹ Eph. 1.

² Rom. 6.

³ Eph. 7.

⁴ Magn. 8.

⁵ Eph. 3.

⁶ Rom. 8.

⁷ Rom. inscr.

Fatherhood of God, beyond the mere fact of the Son's pre-existence with the Father.¹ How far the human nature was complete, whether Christ had a human soul, how the two natures are united in One Person, these are questions which lie outside the scope and grasp of the teaching of Ignatius. Nor again do the epistles present us with a theology of the Cross, or attempt to sound the depths of St. Paul's teaching upon the Death of Christ. The idea of 'justification' is found only in two passages, *i.e.* Rom. 5 and Philad. 8, and only in the latter of these is it used in connection with the Passion. The word 'propitiation' does not occur, and there is only one mention of 'forgiveness' in connection with repentance, in Philad. 8. It is not maintained that Ignatius ignored the teaching associated with such language. His repeated references to the Cross and Passion imply the contrary. But his particular contribution to Christian thought and teaching lay in another direction, and he was content accordingly to repeat, without developing, the simple language of his time upon the Death of Christ.

Such are some of the limits within which the teaching of these epistles moves. But when we come to their positive contents, we find that they witness to a Church tradition which is singularly full and varied, and, above all, they present a view of the Person of Jesus Christ, which is richer and more complete than anything to be found in the writings of the other 'Apostolic Fathers.'

With regard to the former of these, the witness of the epistles to the Church tradition of their time, we may quote the language of Dr. Harnack (*Chronologie*, p. xi). Speaking of the epistles of St. Clement and St. Ignatius, he says: 'He who diligently studies these letters cannot

¹ Polyc. 3, Magn. 6.

fail to perceive what a fulness of traditions, subjects of preaching, doctrines, and forms of organization already existed in the time of Trajan, and in individual churches had attained a secure position.' Among the contents of this Church tradition, we may notice the reference to the Threefold Name in Magn. 13 (cf. Eph. 9, Philad. inscr.). When we come to the historical facts of the Lord's earthly life, we find, first of all, a clear and emphatic witness to the Virgin-birth. 'The virginity of Mary and her child-bearing' formed two of the 'three mysteries,' 'wrought in the silence of God,' but now 'to be proclaimed aloud.'¹ Against the Docetic heretics he is never weary of emphasizing, in language that presents the appearance of being derived either from liturgical formulæ or short creed-like statements,² the Virgin-birth, the Davidic descent, the baptism by John, the crucifixion under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, and the resurrection. See esp. the two passages, Trall. 9, Smyrn. 1, 2. He mentions the star seen at the birth of Jesus Christ,³ and dwells upon the intercourse of the Lord, after His Resurrection, with the Apostles.⁴ Of interest too is the reference to the descent into Hades in Magn. 9 (cf. Philad. 5, 9). He nowhere speaks of the actual fact of the Ascension, although it is presupposed in Magn. 7. But for the purposes which he had in hand, it did not possess the same immediate interest as the facts of the Birth, Passion, and Resurrection, which witness to the reality of the Lord's human nature. The references to the Second Coming of the Lord are very slight. See Eph. 15, and compare the expression in Rom. 10, 'patient abiding for Jesus Christ.' Ignatius speaks of the Holy Spirit in language which plainly shows that he regarded Him as distinct from the Father

¹ Eph. 19.

² See p. 17.

³ Eph. 19.

⁴ Smyrn. 3.

and the Son. Cf. Magn. 13. He speaks of Him as ‘from God,’¹ and regards the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ as wrought through His agency.² Elsewhere he dwells upon His work of sanctification in the Church. See Eph. 9, Philad. inscr., Smyrn. 13. In Philad. 7, Ignatius claims to have received personal revelations from the Spirit.

In two passages Ignatius refers to ordinances of the Apostles. In Magn. 13 the readers are bidden to stand fast ‘in the ordinances of the Lord and the Apostles.’ In Trall. 7 they are urged to be ‘inseparable from Jesus Christ and the bishop, and the ordinances of the Apostles.’

When we come to examine the relation of these letters to the Canon of Scripture, we find very strong traces of the influence of the thoughts and ideas preserved for us in the books of the New Testament, but comparatively few traces of actual quotation from any of the writers of the New Testament. The cast of thought shows strong affinities with the ideas of the Johannine writings and the later epistles of St. Paul, especially St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. But it is difficult to prove that Ignatius is in any passage quoting from the Fourth Gospel. The passages in Philad. 7 and Eph. 17 are not decisive (see notes). The allusions to the actions and words of the Lord exhibit a tradition most closely akin to that found in St. Matthew’s Gospel, with which these epistles exhibit more numerous parallels than with any other N. T. writing. In no passage does he allude definitely to written gospels, though Philad. 5 seems to point to a collection of apostolic writings. In one instance³ he quotes from an apocryphal source, whether written or traditional we cannot tell. For the passage Eph. 19, see

¹ Philad. 7.

² Eph. 19.

³ Smyrn. 3.

notes. With the epistles of St. Paul there are many parallels pointing to the author's acquaintance with them, though without actual quotation. In Eph. 12 the author directly speaks of St. Paul and his epistles. For further parallels with books of the New Testament, see Index of Scriptural passages in vol. ii. We may say in conclusion that the epistles point to a period in which the New Testament writings, though current, had not superseded the oral tradition of the Church, as an authority and standard of teaching.

For his attitude towards the Old Testament, see Magn. 8—10, Philad. 5, 8, 9, with notes.

Ignatius' conception of the Christian faith is more striking than that of any sub-apostolic writer. He starts not from Creation or the Old Testament but from the revelation of God in Christ. In Christ's appearing God has revealed Himself in man, the Eternal in time, the Spiritual in the material.¹ The antithesis of 'spirit' and 'flesh' which is conceived of as reconciled in Christ, runs through the whole theology of Ignatius.² The whole earthly life of Christ has a place in the mystery of redemption, which has a significance for the whole Creation.³ Thus he speaks of 'the virginity of Mary, and her child-bearing, likewise also the death of the Lord,' as 'three mysteries to be proclaimed aloud.'⁴ It is the Person and not merely the teaching of Christ, which is of importance. He is 'our God,' 'my God,' 'God in man,' though never apparently called God absolutely without some defining words.⁵

¹ See esp. Eph. 7, Polyc. 3.

² Cf. Eph. 8, Magn. 1, 13, Polyc. 2.

³ Trall. 9, Smyrn. 6.

⁴ Eph. 19.

⁵ Cf. Eph. inscr., 1, 7, 18, Rom. inscr., Smyrn. 1, Polyc. 8.

The controversial purpose of the letters leads Ignatius to lay special stress upon the reality of the human nature of Christ. The Docetæ, whom he is attacking, conceived of the existence of Christ in a purely metaphysical way, as a spiritual or ideal existence. Against this view Ignatius sets the historical Christ, whose appearing in human form becomes the medium of God's revelation and alone guarantees its truth to man. Hence he emphasizes the facts of His earthly life. The Coming of the Saviour, His Passion and His Resurrection are the three points which distinguish the Gospel from all earlier teaching.¹ Through the Cross, Death, and Resurrection he seeks to be justified.² Especially prominent is the place which he assigns to the Passion. In the inscriptions to two letters (Philad., Trall.) he speaks of the Churches addressed, as 'rejoicing in the Passion' and 'at peace in flesh and spirit through the Passion of Jesus Christ.'³ The Blood of Christ reveals God's love.⁴ In Smyrn. 7 he speaks of Christ as suffering 'for our sins,' and in Eph. 18 he associates Baptism with the cleansing power of the Passion.⁵ In addition to these incidental allusions, he shows acquaintance in one passage⁶ with the ideas represented in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ is 'the High Priest, Who has been entrusted with the Holy of Holies,' but Ignatius immediately connects this thought with that of Christ as the 'Door' of the Father, a conception which we find in John x. 9. In Philad. 8, 11, he speaks of being delivered from 'every bond,' and being 'ransomed' by the grace of Jesus Christ. In these respects he echoes the traditional language of his time.

¹ Philad. 9, cf. Magn. 11.

² Philad. 8.

³ Cf. Eph. inscr.

⁴ Trall. 8, Rom. 7.

⁵ Cf. also Eph. 18, Trail. 11, Rom. 6.

⁶ Philad. 9.

The ideas, however, which chiefly occupy his thoughts are that the Death and Resurrection of Christ have annihilated death, have freed man from the power of evil,¹ and have given him the assurance of eternal life through union with God in Christ. Christ, ‘our Life,’² has passed through death, and life is assured to those who believe in Him and are united with Him. Hence Christians are ‘branches of the Cross.’³ Thus his teaching presents points of contact with St. John, and with the later, rather than the earlier, teaching of St. Paul. St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians exhibits the nearest point of contact between Ignatius and St. Paul. In this connection notice especially the language of Eph. 19, 20 upon ‘the new man,’ and of Trall. 11 upon ‘the one Body.’

The reconciliation of the antithesis between ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ through the union of God and man in Christ is realized practically by Christians in the life of faith and love.⁴ But it finds its fullest expression in the unity of the Church, which represents Christ and shares His life and twofold nature.⁵ Hence the unity of the Church is at once ‘of flesh’ and ‘of spirit.’⁶ The insistence of Ignatius upon the visible unity of the Church is not adequately explained by the pressure of heresy. That he was led to give special emphasis to it by the dangers of his time is undoubtedly true. But it is plainly a consequence of his belief in the principle of the Incarnation, the reconciliation of the outward and the inward, of ‘spirit’ and ‘flesh,’ of ‘God’ and ‘man.’ The Catholic

¹ Eph. 19, Philad. 8.

² Eph. 3, Smyrn. 4.

³ Trall. 9, 11.

⁴ Eph. 8, 14, Smyrn. 6, 13.

⁵ Smyrn. 1, Eph. 5, 17.

⁶ Eph. 10, Magn. 1, 13, Rom. inscr., Smyrn. 12, cf. Eph. 7.

Church is the Body of Christ, and secures the perpetual communication of the One Life of Christ.¹ To impair the unity of the Church by false teaching and separatism is to cut oneself off from the Passion and the sacramental life of the Church.²

The individual churches represent locally the universal Church. As Jesus Christ is the Head of the universal Church, so is the bishop the head of the local Church.³ He is God's representative,⁴ as being the chief member of the local representation of that Church which is the Body of Christ. Hence the bishops are spoken of as being 'in the mind of Jesus Christ.'⁵ They represent, and carry on that reconciliation of 'flesh' and 'spirit,' which is assured through the Incarnation. Thus Ignatius writes to Polycarp: 'Therefore you are of flesh and spirit, that you may humour the things which are visibly present before your face.'⁶ The ministry in the Ignatian Epistles shows a more developed character than that found in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles, or the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome. In these earlier writings the terms 'bishop' or 'overseer' (*episcopus*) and 'presbyter' appear to be synonymous, or possibly, as others maintain,⁷ the word *episcopus* denotes a function exercised by the presbyter.⁸ In the position, however, of Timothy and Titus in the Pastoral Epistles, we have traces of another office, distinct from, and higher than that of the presbyter or *episcopus*. Acting under a commission from St. Paul they had received authority to appoint

¹ Smyrn. 8, Eph. 5, Trall. 11. ² Philad. 3, Smyrn. 6, 8.

³ Smyrn. 8.

⁴ Eph. 6, Magn. 3, Trall. 2, 3.

⁵ Eph. 4, cf. Philad. inscr.

⁶ Polyc. 2.

⁷ e.g. Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 190, 191.

⁸ On these words see further, Add. Note 2, vol. ii.

elders and to rule the churches in Ephesus and Crete.¹ But whether their office was limited to these churches, or whether, like the Apostles, they exercised a roving commission, facts do not enable us definitely to say.² They were apparently apostolic delegates with authority to guard the faith, to found and rule churches, and to ordain and discipline the clergy.³ Thus within the lifetime of the Apostles we have traces of three grades of ministry, viz.—

- (i) Apostles (or their delegates, like Timothy and Titus).
- (ii) Presbyters or Episcopi.
- (iii) Deacons.

When we pass to the Ignatian Epistles we find two important changes.

(i) The bishop or episcopus represents a distinct order from the presbyter, and is superior to him. He alone can give the requisite authority for the performance of ministerial acts.⁴ The monarchical character of his office is clearly shown by the comparison of the bishop to ‘the Father’ or ‘Jesus Christ,’ while the presbyters represent the Apostles. On this comparison see *antea*, p. 18.

(ii) The bishop’s office is localized and he is permanently attached to the local church. Ignatius mentions the bishops of the cities of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia and Smyrna. Of a diocese, in the later sense of the word, there is no distinct trace,⁵ yet the bishop’s authority is not, like that of the Apostles, of

¹ Titus i. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 1—7, v. 17, 22; 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² Cf. 2 Tim. iv. 9; Tit. iii. 12.

³ Gore, *Church and Ministry*, p. 267. ⁴ Smyrn. 8.

⁵ In Rom. 2 Ignatius calls himself ‘bishop of Syria,’ and elsewhere he refers to the ‘Church of Syria’ and its connection with

a general, undefined character, but is limited to a particular church.

Thus in the Ignatian Epistles we find the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. The bishop's office appears for the first time under the name by which it has since been known in history, although, as we have seen, the position of 'Apostolic delegates' in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul resembles that of the later bishops in the nature of the authority exercised.

There are a few other facts which may be noticed about the ministry in the Ignatian Epistles.

1. Closely associated with the bishops, and forming a 'spiritual coronal' about him, are the presbyters, and with them the deacons. The bishop's authority, though monarchical, 'is very far from being autocratic.'¹ In his administration the presbyters form a 'council'² around him as 'the strings to a harp.'³ The writer is scarcely less emphatic in asserting the duty of obedience to the presbyters than he is to the bishop. If the bishop represents the Lord, the presbyters represent the Apostles.⁴ Ignatius bids his readers be subject to the bishop 'as unto the grace of God,' and to the presbytery 'as unto the law of Jesus Christ.'⁵

Similarly he bids his readers obey the deacons. The three orders together form a central authority, so that 'without these there is no church deserving the name.'⁶

2. Ignatius tells us little of the source of the bishop's authority or of the way in which such

himself. Cf. Eph. 21, Magn. 14, Rom. 9, Trall. 13. Probably there was only one Christian centre in Coele-Syria at this time, in which case 'Syria' is a synonym of Antioch. See note Rom. 2.

¹ Lightfoot, I, p. 397.

² See *antea*, p. 18.

³ Eph. 4.

⁴ Magn. 6, Trall. 2, 3, Smyrn. 8.

⁵ Magn. 2.

⁶ Trall. 3.

authority was delegated to him. He speaks of the bishops as representing the authority of Christ, though never as succeeding to the Apostles. On the other hand, he compares the presbyters to the Apostles, though he is thinking of the Apostles in their relation to Christ during His ministry and not as they were after the Ascension, when they themselves became the representatives of Christ.¹ In the passage Trall. 7, however, he urges them to be 'inseparable from Jesus Christ and the bishop and the ordinances of the Apostles.' The last phrase probably refers, as Lightfoot maintains, to the institution of episcopacy, and the words would thus imply that it derived its authority from the Apostles. There may be a similar allusion in the language of Trall. 12, where he bids them 'severally, and especially the presbyters, refresh the bishop to the honour of the Father and of Jesus Christ and of the Apostles.'

3. The language of the epistles does not support the view of Ramsay and others, that episcopacy is insisted on so strongly in these letters because Ignatius recognized it as a new and valuable institution, which he desired to see established everywhere.² From other sources, indeed, it would seem that a representative of the episcopal order was not established in every city church at this time, as in the case of Philippi, in writing to which Church Polycarp only makes mention of their presbyters and deacons.³ But when we study the Ignatian Epistles themselves, we see no trace of an idea that the episcopal

¹. See Gore, *Church and Ministry*, pp. 303, 304.

² *Ch. in R. Emp.*, pp. 370 foll.

³ Polyc., *Phil.* 5. This, however, does not necessarily prove that the presbyters and deacons at Philippi were under the control of no superior order, but only that no representative of that order was located in their city.

office is of recent introduction. 'The writer speaks of the 'bishops established in the furthest quarters.'¹ Without the three orders of bishops, presbyters, and deacons 'there is no church deserving the name.'² Nor can we draw any argument from the absence of any mention of the bishop in the Epistle to the Romans. That epistle is of a purely personal character, and is written with reference to the action of certain members of the Church of Rome, who were anxious to procure a respite for Ignatius. He nowhere salutes or makes mention of any of the officers of the Church in that city, whether bishop, presbyters, or deacons. Hence no argument can fairly be drawn from the absence of all mention of the ministry in the Roman Church, in favour of the idea that the Church at Rome did not possess a representative of one of the three orders, *i.e.* a bishop.

The repeated insistence by Ignatius on the duty of obedience to this threefold ministry was occasioned by the danger arising in his day from the heretical and separatist tendencies of the Docetic and Judaic parties. But it has its roots in that idea of the Church and its unity which we have already described. The same principle, the union of 'flesh' and 'spirit,' of outward and inward, appears in his language upon the Eucharist in Philad. 4, Smyrn. 6, 8. The Eucharist is 'the flesh of Christ,' 'the gift of God,' 'the medicine of immortality.' The 'one cup' brings us into 'union with the Blood' of Christ. The dangers of the time led Ignatius to an emphatic warning to his readers to guard the sacramental unity of the Church, which was broken by the separatists. They are to assemble at the 'one altar.'³ Without the

¹ Eph. 3.

² Trall. 3.

³ Eph. 5, 20, Magn. 7, Trall. 7, Philad. 4 (with notes).

bishop's authority they are not 'to baptize or hold a love-feast.' His authority alone gives 'validity' and 'security' to whatever is done.¹

For his language on baptism, see Eph. 18, Smyrn. 8, Polyc. 6.

The teaching of Ignatius upon the Incarnation, as a fact and as a principle, has its roots in the teaching of St. Paul and St. John, and was taken up by later Fathers. At the close of the second century it finds expression in St. Irenæus. Once more, amid the perils arising from Arianism, St. Athanasius, in the fourth century, seized upon its leading idea, that in Jesus Christ God Himself has entered our human nature, in order to reveal Himself to man and endow man with the gift of eternal life. In that faith has lain the secret of 'the victory that overcometh the world.'

Once again, when Ignatius asserted that in the Incarnation was effected the reconciliation of 'flesh' and 'spirit,' of the material and the spiritual, he stated a principle that has found expression in the life and worship of the Catholic Church. Gnosticism and later mysticism alike have emphasized the opposition between spirit and matter, and have tended to despiritualize the material. In the Middle Ages men were inclined to confuse the two, and so to materialize the spiritual. In her unchanging faith and the permanent elements of her life and worship, the Church witnesses to the truer view, and reconciles the antithesis. In 'the Word made flesh' we see the promise of the consummation of all things.

¹ Smyrn. 8.

I. THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

[Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and was the port which conducted in Roman times most of the trade of the great highway leading from the East to the Ægæan. There is probably an allusion to this great trade-route in Eph. 12. The city was naturally chosen by St. Paul as a centre for missionary labours. See Acts xviii., xix. Christianity spread rapidly, and Ephesus is mentioned first among the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation (Rev. i. 11, ii. 1). After the death of St. Paul, Ephesus became the home of St. John. There is possibly an allusion to the connection of both Apostles with the city in c. 11. Ignatius had not visited Ephesus, but the Church had sent delegates to him at Smyrna. The present letter was written from Smyrna to thank them for their kindly interest in him. He reminds them of their glorious history (cc. 8, 11, 12), and praises them for their adherence to the truth and their regard for order (c. 6). At the same time he warns them against false teachers who had been passing through Ephesus (c. 9). He urges upon them the importance, in face of heresy, of faith in the historical manifestation of Jesus Christ, a more frequent use of corporate worship, and adherence to the bishop. From the language of cc. 7, 18, 19, 20, and the opening inscription (see notes), it would seem that the heresy alluded to was Docetic. There are no references to Judaism.]

IGNATIUS, who is also Theophorus,¹ to her that is blessed with greatness² through the fulness³ of God the Father, foreordained before the ages to be continually for abiding and unchangeable glory; united and chosen out by a passion truly suffered,⁴ through the will of the Father and Jesus Christ our

¹ Probably a title adopted by Ignatius himself to remind him of his Christian calling. The word may bear an active or a passive meaning, ‘bearing God’ or ‘borne (or inspired) by God,’ according as we read it *θεοφόρος* or *θεόφορος*. In favour of the active meaning it may be urged, (1) Ignatius in c. 9 uses the word in this sense. (2) The word was commonly interpreted in this sense in the following centuries. Thus, in the Antiochene Acts of the Martyrdom, c. 2, when Trajan asks, ‘Who is he that beareth God?’ Ignatius replies, ‘He that hath Christ in his breast.’ (3) The idea thus contained in the word was common in early writers. Cf. the early Latin reading of 1 Cor. vi. 20, ‘glorify and bear God in your body,’ found also in Tertullian and Cyprian. From the passive sense, ‘borne by God’ arose the tradition that Ignatius was the child whom our Lord took up in His arms (Mark ix. 36).

² The word ‘greatness’ refers to the spiritual growth of the Church at Ephesus.

³ The word ‘fulness,’ or *pleroma*, is the word used in John i. 16, Rom. xv. 29, Eph. i. 23, etc. It denotes, in the language of St. Paul and St. John, the whole sum of the Divine attributes. Out of the Divine fulness each man receives the gifts and graces needed for the spiritual life. The word ‘fulness,’ as also the words ‘blessed,’ ‘foreordained,’ ‘glory,’ ‘chosen out,’ ‘the will [of the Father],’ are perhaps reminiscences of the opening verses of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians.

⁴ The words ‘truly suffered’ are an allusion to the Docetic error.

God ; to the Church which is at Ephesus [in Asia], worthy of congratulation, heartiest greeting in Jesus Christ and in joy that is without reproach.

I. I welcomed in God your dearly loved name,¹ which is yours by nature² [in an upright and just mind] by faith and love towards Christ Jesus our Saviour. Being imitators of God, you were kindled into action by the blood of God, and perfectly fulfilled a task which accorded with your nature. For when you heard³ that I was come from Syria in bonds for the Name and hope common to us all, and that I was hoping by your prayer to attain my purpose of fighting with wild beasts at Rome, that through my attaining I may be enabled to be a disciple, you were anxious to visit me. I received therefore your numerous body⁴ in the name of God in the person of Onesimus, whose love surpasses words, who is, besides, in the flesh your bishop. I pray that you

¹ The word ‘name’ is used in the sense of ‘character.’

² This character was due to natural gifts rather than training or accidental circumstances. The words in brackets have been added by Lightfoot from the abridged Syriac version, having probably fallen out at a time earlier than any existing copies of the Greek text.

³ Probably at the point where Ignatius’ guards took the northern route through Philadelphia, instead of the southern route through Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus, messengers were sent to inform those Churches of Ignatius’ approaching visit to Smyrna.

⁴ In receiving their bishop Onesimus, Ignatius received the whole Church which he represented.

may love him with a love according to Jesus Christ, and that you may all be like him. For blessed is He Who granted unto you, worthy as you are, to possess such a bishop.

II. Concerning my fellow-servant Burrhus,¹ who by God's appointment is your deacon and is blessed in all things, I pray that he may remain here unto the honour of yourselves and the bishop. And Crocus, who is worthy of God and of you, whom I received as a pattern of the love borne by you, has relieved me in all things—may the Father of Jesus Christ in like manner refresh² him—along with Onesimus and Burrhus and Euplus and Fronto, in whose presence my love saw you all. May I have joy of you all continually, if I be worthy. So then it is fitting in every way to glorify Jesus Christ Who has glorified you, that in one obedience you may be perfectly joined together, submitting yourselves to the bishop and to the presbytery, and may in all things be found sanctified.

III. I do not command you, as though I were somewhat. For even though I be bound in the Name, I have not yet become perfected in Jesus Christ. For now I am making a beginning of discipleship, and I address you as my fellow-disciples.³

¹ For Burrhus, cf. Philad. 11, Smyrn. 12, from which we see that the request of Ignatius was granted.

² Probably a reminiscence of 2 Tim. i. 16.

³ The word used here (*συνδιδασκαλῖται*) is understood by Lightfoot and Zahn to mean 'school-fellows.' The word is

For it were meet for me to be anointed by you¹ for the contest with faith, admonition, patience, long-suffering. But since love does not suffer me to be silent concerning you, I have therefore hastened to exhort you to set yourselves in harmony with the mind of God. For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable Life, is the Mind of the Father, as also the bishops, established in the furthest quarters,² are in the mind of Jesus Christ.

IV. Hence it is fitting for you to set yourselves in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as indeed you do. For your noble presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted to the bishop, as the strings to a

not found elsewhere, but Lightfoot adduces in illustration a Latin word found in inscriptions, ‘compedagogita,’ which is used in the plural to denote slaves trained in the same school or under the same master. The master in this case is Christ.

¹ The anointing of the athlete was the work of the trainer. Cf. Rom. 3. In both passages the idea is that the Church alluded to had encouraged and instructed, by example and precept, the martyrs of Christ. Ephesus was, in Ignatius’ phrase, ‘the highway of martyrs’ (c. 12). Prisoners condemned to the wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre, coming from the East, would in most cases sail from the port of Ephesus to Ostia. Ramsay (*Ch. in R. Emp.*, p. 318) shows that the route taken by Ignatius was unusual.

² Ignatius is introducing the great theme found in all his epistles, the importance of unity. Christ is at one with the Father; the bishops, however distant from each other, are at one with Jesus Christ. In the phrase ‘furthest quarters,’ ‘Ignatius would be contemplating regions as distant as Gaul on the one hand and Mesopotamia on the other’ (Lightfoot).

harp. And thus by means of your accord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung.¹ Form yourselves one and all into a choir, that blending in concord, taking the key-note of God, you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that He may hear you and recognize by means of your well-doing that you are members of His Son. Therefore it is profitable for you to live in unblameable unity, that you may be also partakers of God continually.

V. For if I in a short space of time had such intercourse with your bishop, not after the common way of men, but after the spirit, how much more do I congratulate you, who are knit to him as closely as is the Church to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ to the Father, that all things may accord in unity. Let no man be deceived. If any one be not within the enclosure of the altar,² he lacks the bread of God.³ For if the prayer of one or two hath so great efficacy,⁴ how much more has the prayer of the bishop and of the whole Church. So then he who comes not to the congregation thereby shows

¹ Jesus Christ is the theme of their song. For the metaphor, cf. Philad. 1, and Rom. 2.

² On the word translated ‘enclosure of the altar,’ see Trall. 7, Philad. 4, with notes. The ‘enclosure of the altar’ is the court of the congregation in the old Tabernacle or Temple. This was separated from the outer court. Here it denotes the assembly of the faithful in each individual church.

³ Lightfoot brackets the words ‘of God.’

⁴ Cf. Matt. xviii. 18—20.

his pride and straightway cuts himself off. For it is written, '*God resisteth the proud.*'¹ So then let us take heed not to resist the bishop, that we may be living in submission to God.²

VI. And so far as a man sees a bishop keeping silence,³ let him hold him all the more in reverence. For every one, whom the Master of the household sends to administer His own household, we ought to receive even as the Sender's very self. The bishop then we ought plainly to regard as the Lord Himself. Now Onesimus of his own accord praises highly your orderly manner of life in God, how that you all live in accordance with truth and that in your midst no heresy has its dwelling. Nay, you do not even listen to any one if he speak of aught beyond⁴ Jesus Christ in truth.

VII. For some are wont, out of malicious cunning, to bear about with them the Name, while they practise certain other deeds unworthy of God. These you must needs avoid as wild beasts.⁵ For they are mad dogs, biting stealthily, against whom you must be on your guard, for their bite is hard

¹ Prov. iii. 34.

² The translation follows Zahn's reading. Lightfoot's text yields the sense, 'we may be God's by our subjection.'

³ Ignatius is here indirectly pleading for their bishop Onesimus, whose quiet and modest demeanour might lead some to despise him. Cf. c. 15, and the similar directions in Philad. 1, Magn. 3.

⁴ Lightfoot's reading has been followed.

⁵ Cf. Smyrn. 4, Philad. 2.

to heal. There is one Physician, of flesh and of spirit,¹ originate and unoriginate,² God in man, true Life in death, son of Mary³ and Son of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord.

VIII. Let no man then deceive you, as indeed you are not deceived, for you are wholly given to God. For when no evil desire is implanted in you, which can torment you, then are you living after a godly manner. I devote myself to abasement for your sakes,⁴ I surrender myself as an offering for

¹ On the antithesis of ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ in these epistles, see Introd. § 4. The word ‘spirit’ expresses here the Divine nature of Christ. We may compare 2 Clem. c. 9, ‘Christ the Lord . . . being first spirit, then became flesh.’ The human element is expressed by the word ‘flesh.’ For this balanced antithesis, cf. Polyc. 3.

² The terms employed by Ignatius are *γεννητός* and *ἀγέννητος*. Ignatius is using the words to express little more than ‘created and uncreate.’ Such language, however, points to an early period of doctrinal statement, and could not have been used in later days without incurring the charge of heresy, as it would have seemed to deny the Divine generation of the Son. ‘The conception of a Divine Sonship was realized by the Church before the conception of a Divine generation’ (Swete, *Apostles’ Creed*, p. 28). Hence the use of such language by Ignatius at a time when there was no exact definition of theological terms involves nothing inconsistent with the Nicene Creed, and affords no proof that he denied the pre-existence of Christ. This latter finds expression in Magn. 6 and Polyc. 3. See further Lightfoot’s *Excursus*, vol. ii. pp. 90, foll.

³ The whole of this passage is aimed at the Docetic error, which denied the reality of the Incarnation.

⁴ Literally, ‘I am your offscouring.’ The same word,

the Church of you Ephesians, which is renowned unto the ages. They that are of the flesh cannot do the works of the Spirit,¹ neither can they that are spiritual do the works of the flesh, even as faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith. But even the things which you do after the flesh are spiritual.² For you do all things in Jesus Christ.

IX. I have learned that certain persons from yonder³ have passed through your city, bringing with them false teaching. These you did not suffer to sow seeds among you, for you closed your ears that they might not receive the seeds sown by them, since you were stones⁴ of the temple, prepared beforehand⁵ for a building of God the Father, being raised to the heights by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross, using as your rope the

περίψημα, is used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. iv. 13. It is a word used of condemned criminals of the lowest classes, who were sacrificed as expiatory offerings in times of plague or other visitations, to avert the wrath of the Gods. It thus includes the two ideas of 'self-devotion' and 'abasement.'

¹ Suggested by 1 Cor. ii. 14 sq.

² See Introd. § 4.

³ It is uncertain what place is alluded to. Lightfoot conjectures Philadelphia.

⁴ The change of metaphor is sudden, after the manner of Ignatius, and is followed by another change. They are in succession the soil in which seed is sown, stones of a building, and members of a festal procession.

⁵ Lightfoot's emendation has been adopted.

Holy Spirit. Your faith is the windlass,¹ and love is the way which leads up to God. So then you are all companions in festal procession along the way,² bearing your God and shrine,³ bearing Christ and your holy treasures, fully arrayed in the commandments of Jesus Christ. And in your rejoicings I too have part, and am suffered to associate with you by letter, and to rejoice with you that you love nothing pertaining to man's outward life,⁴ but God only.

X. And for the rest of men pray unceasingly—for there is in them hope of repentance—that they may attain unto God. Suffer them therefore to learn discipleship at least from your works. In face of their outbursts of wrath be meek ; in face of their boastful words be humble ; meet their revilings

¹ The whole of this passage is a somewhat extravagant expansion in great detail of the metaphor used by St. Paul in Eph. ii. 20 sq. In the building of the Church, the faithful are the stones, the Cross is the crane, the Holy Spirit is the rope by which the stones are raised, faith is the windlass which sets the machine in motion, and love is the inclined plane along which the stones are drawn.

² Another change of metaphor. The figure is now a heathen procession, in which the pilgrims, arrayed in festal attire, carry small shrines, images, and other sacred emblems. Such processions would be common in Syria, Asia, and elsewhere.

³ For these shrines, cf. Acts xix. 24. They were small models offered to the god or goddess, or kept at home as amulets, and sometimes placed in graves by the side of the dead.

⁴ Lightfoot's emendation has been adopted.

with prayers ; where they are in error, be steadfast in the faith ; in face of their fury be gentle. Be not eager to retaliate upon them. Let our forbearance prove us their brethren. Let us endeavour to be imitators of the Lord, striving who can suffer the greater wrong,¹ who can be defrauded, who be set at naught, that no rank weed of the Devil be found in you. But in all purity and sobriety abide in Christ Jesus in flesh and in spirit.

XI. These are the last times.² Henceforth let us feel shame, let us stand in awe of the long-suffering of God, lest it turn to our judgment. For either let us fear the wrath to come, or let us love the grace which is present—either this or that ; only be it ours to be found in Christ Jesus unto life, which is life indeed. Apart from Him, let nothing dazzle you. For in Him I wear my bonds, my spiritual pearls, in which I pray that I may rise again by the help of your prayer—may it ever be mine to have a share in that—that I may be found among the band of those Ephesian Christians, who were, besides, continually of one accord³ with the Apostles⁴ in the power of Jesus Christ.

¹ A reminiscence of 1 Cor. vi. 7.

² Cf. 1 John ii. 18.

³ Or with Zahn's reading, 'consorted with.'

⁴ In the word 'Apostles' St. Paul and St. John are included, possibly also St. Peter, whose first epistle is addressed to the Asiatic Christians. St. Andrew and St. Philip are also represented as having lived in these regions.

XII. I know who I am and to whom I write. I am a condemned man, you have obtained mercy. I am subject to peril, you are established secure. You are the highway of those who are being conducted by death unto God.¹ You are initiated into the mysteries along with Paul,² who was sanctified and well approved, who is worthy of congratulation ; in whose footsteps may I be found closely following, when I attain unto God ; who makes mention of you in every letter³ in Christ Jesus.

XIII. Be diligent therefore to come together more often to render thanks⁴ to God and to give

¹ Ephesus was ‘a highway of martyrs.’ Criminals were frequently reserved for the shows and hunting scenes in the amphitheatre, and the provinces were resorted to for the supply of victims. The Christians would be treated as common criminals, unless they were Roman citizens. Such bands of prisoners from the East would pass along the great route which reached the sea at Ephesus, and would thence be shipped to Ostia, the port of Rome.

² A metaphor derived from the ancient mysteries and suggested by the language of St. Paul, who constantly uses the word of the Gospel, and in Phil. iv. 12, speaks of himself as ‘initiated’ (A.V. ‘I am instructed’). The reference is to St. Paul’s long stay at Ephesus and intercourse with the Ephesian Christians. Ignatius is speaking of their intercourse with martyrs, and so does not mention St. John.

³ The words ‘in every letter’ are difficult. Pearson translates ‘throughout his letter,’ and refers it to the Epistle to the Ephesians. Possibly Ignatius knew of St. Paul’s relations with the Ephesians from sources which we do not possess.

⁴ Lit. ‘come together for thanksgiving.’ The word

glory. For when you frequently assemble together, the forces of Satan are overthrown and the destruction which he is planning is undone by the harmony of your faith. Nothing is better than peace, by which all warfare of heavenly and earthly foes is brought to naught.

XIV. None of these things escapes your notice, if you hold fast perfectly your faith and love in Jesus Christ, for these are the beginning and the end of life. The beginning is faith, the end is love. And the two blending in unity are God, and all else follows on these, ending in perfect goodness. No man who professes faith lives in sin, nor if he possesses love, does he live in hatred. The tree is manifest by its fruit.¹ In like manner they who profess to be Christ's, shall be apparent by their deeds. For at this time the Work² is no mere matter of profession, but is seen only when a man is found living in the power of faith unto the end.

XV. It is better to keep silence and to be than to talk and not to be.³ It is good to teach, if the speaker act. Now there was One Teacher, Who

εὐχαριστία is here probably used generally, but indirectly refers to the Eucharist.

¹ See Matt. xii. 33; cf. Luke vi. 44.

² For 'the Work' in the sense of 'the preaching and practice of Christianity,' see Rom. 3, and cf. Acts xv. 38, Phil. ii. 30.

³ Probably he is thinking of the quiet demeanour of their bishop.

spake and it came to pass.¹ And the deeds which He has done in silence are worthy of the Father. He who is truly master of the spoken word of Jesus is able also to listen to His silence,² that he may be perfect, and so may act by his speech, and be understood by his silence. Nothing is hidden from the Lord, but even our secrets are brought nigh unto Him. Let us therefore do all things in the assurance that He dwells within us, that we may be His shrines³ and He Himself may dwell in us as God. For this is indeed true and will be made manifest before our eyes by the services of love which as our bounden duty we render unto Him.

XVI. Be not deceived, my brethren. They that corrupt houses⁴ shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If then they who did such deeds after the flesh were put to death, how much more if a man by his evil teaching corrupt God's faith for which Jesus Christ was crucified. Such a man, becoming defiled, shall go into unquenchable fire, and in like manner he that heareth him.

¹ He applies to Christ's work the words which the Psalmist used (Ps. xxxii. [xxxiii.] 9) of God's action in Creation.

² Instances of this silence are the thirty years' retirement before His public ministry, His withdrawal from popular demonstrations, His retirement for prayer, and His silence at his trial.

³ Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19, 2 Cor. vi. 16, Rev. xxi. 3, and see Philad. 7.

⁴ Suggested by the passages quoted in the preceding note. The 'corrupters of houses' refer to those who pollute their hearts and bodies by evil.

XVII. For this cause¹ the Lord received the ointment² upon His head, that He might breathe the odour of incorruption upon the Church. Be not anointed with the foul odour of the teaching of the Prince of this world, lest he lead you captive and exclude you from the life set before you. And why do we not all become prudent by receiving the knowledge of God, which is Jesus Christ? Why do we foolishly perish in ignorance of the gift which the Lord has truly sent?

XVIII. My spirit abases itself for the sake of the Cross,³ which is an offence⁴ to the unbelievers, but to us it is salvation and life eternal. Where is the wise man? Where is he that disputeth? Where is the boasting of the so-called men of

¹ The words refer to what follows, 'that He might breathe,' etc.

² This refers to the anointing at Bethany. See Mark xiv. 3 sq., Matt. xxvi. 6 sq., John xii. 2 sq. Zahn and Lightfoot find the parallelism to 'breathe upon the church' in the words recorded by St. John only, 'the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' They infer accordingly from the passage a knowledge by Ignatius of St. John's narrative. But it is more probable that the relation here conceived of between Christ and the Church is that of the Head to the Body. The Body partakes of the fragrant ointment which has been poured 'upon the Head.' This interpretation, which is suggested by Von der Goltz (*Texte u. Unters.* xii. 3), accords with the interpretation of the incident given by Origen, c. *Cels.* vi. 79.

³ Lit. 'my spirit is the offscouring of the Cross.' See note on c. 8.

⁴ Suggested by 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. The following clause is a reminiscence of the same chapter.

understanding? For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary according to a Divine purpose,¹ of the seed of David, and yet of the Holy Spirit; Who was born and baptized, that by His Passion He might purify water.²

XIX. And from the prince of this world were hidden³ Mary's virginity and her child-bearing, in like manner too⁴ the death of the Lord.⁵ Three

¹ Or 'dispensation' (*oikonomia*), a word specially used of the Incarnation. Cf. Eph. i. 10.

² The thought of Ignatius appears to be that by His own baptism our Lord set apart and appropriated water to the use of His Church in the future for the Sacrament of Baptism. The *virtue* of baptism, however, was derived from the cleansing power of the Cross communicated in the Sacrament. Hence the reference to the Passion. Similarly the water of Baptism is connected with the Cross in Barnabas 11.

³ The idea that Satan was deceived by the mysterious silence and reserve of God in the Incarnation is found in writers of the second, third, and fourth centuries. Thus Gregory of Nyssa (*Or. Cat.* 26) says: 'He who first deceived man by the bait of sensual pleasure, is himself deceived by the presentment of the human form.'

⁴ One of the two MSS. of the Curetonian Syriac Version omits all mention of the death, and dissociates 'the three mysteries' from what precedes. The words then run: 'the virginity of M. and the birth of our Lord and the three mysteries of a cry.' But it is difficult to see what 'the three mysteries' can mean, when thus dissociated from the preceding words. The absence of the omitted clause in the quotation of this passage by Origen (*Hom. in Luc.* vi.) is explained by the fact that he is quoting the passage merely with reference to the Virgin-Birth.

⁵ By 'the death of the Lord' here, Ignatius means the atonement brought about through the death. The fact was

mysteries are these for open proclamation, wrought in God's silence. How then were they manifested to the ages? A star¹ shone forth in Heaven more brightly than all the stars, and its light was greater than words can tell, and its strange appearing caused perplexity. And all the other stars,² with the sun and moon, formed themselves into a band about the star. But the star itself surpassed them all in its brightness. And there was distress to know whence came this strange sight so unlike the other stars. From that time all sorcery and every spell began to lose their power;³ the ignorance of wickedness began to vanish away; the overthrow

known to Satan; its significance escaped him. Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 7 sq.

¹ A later expansion, doubtless, of the incident described in Matt. ii. 1 sq., but whether derived from oral tradition or a written source, we cannot tell. The only other passage where Ignatius shows knowledge of a tradition other than that preserved in our Gospels is in Smyrn. 3.

² The idea appears to have been suggested by Joseph's dream. For similar legendary additions, see passages quoted by Lightfoot, vol. ii. pp. 81, 82. How far this passage is intended as an actual description it is difficult to say.

³ Magic and witchcraft were widely prevalent in the Empire throughout the first four centuries. Cf. Acts xix. 19 for an account of its prevalence at Ephesus. The emperor Hadrian, in a letter written to Servianus about 134 A.D., says with reference to the city of Alexandria: 'There is no ruler of a synagogue there, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, a quack.' The idea that the power of witchcraft was broken by the coming of Christ is commonly found in the Fathers.

of the ancient dominion was being brought to pass,¹ since God was appearing in human form unto newness of life eternal. That which had been perfected in the mind of God was coming into being. Hence all things were disturbed, because the overthrow of death was being planned.

XX. If Jesus Christ permit me through your prayer, and it be God's will, in my second treatise, which I am about to write unto you, I will go on to set forth the Divine plan, which I began to expound, with reference to the new man,² Jesus Christ, consisting in faith in Him and love toward Him, in His Passion and Resurrection, especially if the Lord make any³ revelation to me. Meet in common assembly in grace, every one of you, man by man, in one faith and in one Jesus Christ, Who is according to the flesh of the stock of David, the Son of man and Son of God, so that you may obey the bishop and the presbytery with a mind free from distraction ; breaking one bread,⁴ which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote preserving us that we should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ.

¹ Lightfoot's reading has been adopted.

² For the 'new man,' cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. Lightfoot suggests that Ignatius may have understood Eph. iv. 24 to refer to Christ.

³ Zahn's emendation has been adopted.

⁴ For the phrase, cf. Acts ii. 46, xx. 7, etc., 1 Cor. x. 16. The reference is to the Eucharist, which is the bond of unity between Christ and His members. See Smyrn. 8, Philad. 4.

XXI. I am devoted to you¹ and to those whom you sent to Smyrna for the honour of God. It is from thence, moreover, that I am writing to you with thanksgiving to God, and with love for Polycarp as well as for yourselves. Remember me, even as Jesus Christ remembers you. Pray for the Church which is in Syria, whence I am being led in bonds to Rome, though I am the last among the faithful there; according as I was deemed worthy to be found destined for the honour of God. Farewell in God the Father and in Jesus Christ our common Hope.

¹ Lit. 'I am a sacrifice for you.' The word *ἀντίψυχον*, used here, occurs again, Smyrn. 10, Polyc. 2, 6. It closely resembles the word used in c. 8. But the prominent idea is simply 'devotion to, and love for, another'. The word may be illustrated by another word of similar formation, *ἰσόψυχος*, 'like-minded,' which is found not only in Phil. ii. 20, but also in the LXX. version of Ps. iv. [lv.] 14 (translated in the P.-B. V. 'my companion').

II. THE EPISTLE TO THE MAGNESIANS.

[Magnesia by the Maeander was about fifteen Roman miles south-east of Ephesus. The foundation of the Church there probably dates from St. Paul's residence at Ephesus (Acts xix. 10—26). The Magnesian Christians, like the Ephesians, on hearing of Ignatius' visit to Smyrna, had sent delegates to that city, including representatives of all three orders of the ministry (c. 2). Ignatius writes to acknowledge their interest in him. As in other epistles, he urges the importance of unity and the duty of obedience to the ministry, especially warning them against presuming upon the youthfulness of their bishop (c. 3). In cc. 8—10 he deals with a form of Judaistic error, against which he warns them, without, however, implying its actual existence at Magnesia (cf. cc. 11, 12, 14). There are incidental allusions to Docetism (cc. 9—11). See further Add. Note I, vol. ii.]

IGNATIUS, who is also Theophorus, to her that has been blessed by the grace of God the Father in Christ Jesus our Saviour, in Whom I salute the Church which is in Magnesia by the Maeander, and wish it in God the Father and in Jesus Christ heartiest greeting.

I. When I learned that your godly love shows itself in a most orderly demeanour,¹ I rejoiced and resolved to address myself to you in the faith of

¹ *i.e.* their submission to authority.

Jesus Christ. For having been granted a title of the highest reverence,¹ in my bonds which I wear I sing the praises of the churches,² and I pray that in them there may be union of flesh and spirit,³ which belong to Jesus Christ, our continual Life, an union in both faith and love—for there is nothing better than that—and, more than all, union with Jesus and the Father. In Him we shall endure all the malicious attacks of the prince of this world, and, escaping from them, shall attain unto God.

II. Since therefore I have been permitted to see you in the person of Damas, your godly bishop, and the worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and my fellow-servant, the deacon Zotion, of whom may I have joy, because he is subject unto the bishop as unto the grace of God, and to the presbytery as unto the law of Jesus Christ—⁴

III. And for yourselves, it is fitting that you too should not treat lightly the youth of your bishop, but considering the power of God the Father,⁵ pay

¹ Probably the title of ‘a prisoner of Jesus Christ.’ Cf. Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1, Philem. 1, 9.

² Cf. Eph. 4, Rom. 2. Here, as there, Ignatius ‘compares himself to some gay reveller; his fetters are his holiday decoration.’—LIGHTFOOT.

³ Cf. Rom. inscr. and below, c. 13. On Ignatius’ conception of the unity of the Church, see Introd. § 4. The source of the Church’s unity, as of its life, is Christ Himself. See below, ‘union with Jesus and the Father.’ Cf. Trall. 11.

⁴ ‘The bishop is here regarded as the dispenser of blessings; the presbyters as the representatives and guardians of order.’—LIGHTFOOT. The sentence is unfinished.

⁵ *i.e.* the authority bestowed on him by God.

him all reverence. For in like manner I have perceived that the holy presbyters have not presumed upon his seemingly youthful state,¹ but yield place to him as to one who is prudent² in God, or rather not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, even to Him Who is Bishop of all men. So then for the honour of Him, Who desired you, it is fitting that you should obey without dissembling. For it is not that a man deceives this visible bishop,³ but rather that he tries to cheat Him Who is invisible. And in such case it is not with flesh that he has to do, but with God Who knows the things that are in secret.

IV. So then it is fitting not only to be called, but also to be Christians. Even as there are some who have the name ‘bishop’ always on their lips, and yet in everything act apart from him. Now

¹ The words *νεωτερικὴν τάξιν* have been variously translated. The rendering given above follows Pearson and Lightfoot. Others, seeing in the words an allusion to episcopacy as a newly-created institution, translate ‘not recognizing the seemingly newly-created office.’ But, apart from the fact that the language of Ignatius lends no countenance to the view that he regarded episcopacy as a new institution, the words will not admit of this rendering. Zahn renders ‘the ordination of a young man,’ but this puts a strain on the words. The translation above gives good sense. Damas outwardly appeared youthful, but showed a wisdom beyond his years.

² The reading of the Armenian Version has been followed.

³ A reference to the original meaning of the word, ‘over-seer.’ Cf. Rom. 9.

such seem to me to be not men of a good conscience, seeing that they gather not together in a valid way¹ according to command.

V. So then the things of this life have an end, and there are set together before us the two issues of life and death, and each man shall surely go to his own place.² For just as there are two coinages, the one of God, the other of the world, and each one of them has stamped upon it its own image, the unbelievers the stamp of this world, and they that in love believe, the image of God the Father through Jesus Christ,³ through Whom unless we are ready of our own accord to die unto His Passion,⁴ His life is not in us—⁵

VI. Seeing therefore that in the persons already mentioned I beheld in faith your whole number, and have welcomed them, I urge you, be diligent to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the pattern⁶ of God, and the presbyters

¹ Cf. Smyrn. 8 note.

² Acts i. 25. Cf. *Clement of Rome*, c. 5, and Polyc., *Phil.* 9.

³ Cf. Heb. i. 3, where Christ is Himself the ‘impress’ of the Father’s ‘essence.’ This Divine image is stamped upon the believer by his union with Christ.

⁴ Lit. ‘die into His Passion.’ The Christian becomes identified with Christ in His Passion, and dies with Him. Cf. the language of St. Paul on baptism into Christ in Rom. vi. 3, Gal. iii. 27; also Rom. vi. 5, Gal. ii. 20.

⁵ The sentence is unfinished. The frequent occurrence of such broken sentences is an indication of haste in the composition of these letters.

⁶ Reading *τύπον*, which has the support of the Syriac and

after the pattern of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, seeing they are entrusted with a service under¹ Jesus Christ, Who before the ages was with the Father, and appeared at the end.² Therefore seeking to conform yourselves to the ways of God,³ reverence one another, and let no man look upon his neighbour after the flesh, but in Jesus Christ love one another continually. Let there be nothing

Armenian Versions. The Greek text, Latin Version, and the Longer Greek text read *τόπον*, ‘in the place of.’

There are two types of authority to which Ignatius likens the authority of the bishop, both being suggested by the memory of the Lord’s earthly ministry. (1) The bishop represents the authority of the Father, to whom Christ, as Son of Man, during His earthly life yielded obedience (cf. Trall. 3, Smyrn. 8, and present passage). (2) The bishop represents the authority of Christ over His Apostles (cf. Trall. 2). In Magn. 13 we find both comparisons.

The presbyters are regularly compared to the Apostles. Cf. Trall. 2, 3; Smyrn. 8.

The deacons are also compared to Jesus Christ, but in His relation as Son of Man to the Father. See present chapter and Trall. 3 (note).

The word ‘council’ is suggested by primitive Church custom. The bishop sat in the centre, with the presbyters forming a ‘corona’ about him (cf. c. 13). Cf. Trall. 3, Philad. 8. In *App. Const.* ii. 28 the presbyters are called ‘the council of the Church.’

¹ Or ‘a service in which Jesus Christ ministered.’ (Cf. Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45. Cf. Trall. 3.) For the rendering given, cf. 2 Cor. xi. 23, 1 Tim. iv. 6.

² Cf. Heb. i. 2.

³ Cf. Polyc. I note.

among you which shall be able to divide you, but be united with the bishop, and with them that have the rule over you for a pattern and lesson of incorruption.

VII. As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father¹ [being united with Him²], neither of Himself nor by the Apostles, so neither do you act in anything apart from the bishop and presbyters. Neither attempt to persuade yourselves that anything is right which you do of yourselves apart. But in common let there be one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love, in joy that is without blame, which³ is Jesus Christ —for there is naught better than He. Gather yourselves together, all of you, as unto one shrine, even God,⁴ as unto one altar, even unto One Jesus

¹ Cf. John viii. 28.

² Cf. Smyrn. 3.

³ The relative refers to the whole clause. ‘This perfect unity is Jesus Christ.’—LIGHTFOOT. In place of the relative, which the Latin Version reads, the Greek text has ‘there is one Jesus Christ.’

⁴ The rendering given follows the text of Lightfoot, and adopts his reading Θεόν, for Θεοῦ of the Greek text and Latin Version; ‘one shrine, even God,’ instead of ‘one shrine of God.’ With this reading God is compared to the shrine, and Jesus Christ to the altar-court, through which in the Jewish Temple access was gained to the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. The idea is that Christ is the means of access to the Father. The whole passage is an appeal for unity, which can only come through being in Jesus Christ, Who is Himself in the Father. For the word altar, cf. Eph. 5, Trall. 7, Philad. 4. See also Heb. xiii. 10. For the whole idea of the passage cf. Heb. ix. 6 sq.

Christ, Who proceeded from One Father,¹ and is in One and returned to One.

VIII. Be not deceived by strange doctrines nor by ancient fables,² seeing that they are profitless. For if, until now, we live after the rule of Judaism,³ we confess that we have not received grace.⁴ For the Divine prophets lived a life in accordance with Christ Jesus.⁵ For this cause too they were persecuted, being inspired by [His] grace, so that unbelievers⁶

¹ The reference is to His earthly mission. The language of this passage recalls John i. 18, xiii. 3, xvi. 28.

² Cf. 1 Tim. i. 4, iv. 7, Tit. i. 14, iii. 9. In those passages, as also in the present passage, the reference is probably to Rabbinic fables and the allegorical interpretations of Jewish history. See Hort (*Judaistic Christianity*, p. 135 sq.). In the expressions of this epistle and of that to the Philadelphians there is nothing which necessarily points to a mixture of Gnosticism and Judaism as Lightfoot supposes. See further Add. Note 1, vol. ii.

³ Cf. Gal. i. 13, ii. 14. By 'the rule of Judaism,' Ignatius means the observance of Jewish rites.

⁴ Cf. Gal. ii. 21, v. 4. The Pauline contrast of 'grace' and 'law' underlies the passage.

⁵ For these references to the Old Testament prophets cf. Philad. 5, 8, 9. These Judaistic teachers set up the authority of the Old Testament against the Gospel, and refused to accept anything in the latter which was not prophesied in the former. Ignatius maintains that the teaching of the prophets anticipated, and was completed by, the perfect revelation of God in Christ. For this Pauline thought, cf. Rom. i. 2, iii. 21. Cf. also 1 Pet. i. 10, and the present epistle c. 9 (end).

⁶ i. e. unbelievers of a later age, who would be struck by the fulfilment of prophecy.

might be fully convinced that there is One God Who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, Who is His Word,¹ coming forth from silence, Who in all things did the good pleasure of Him that sent Him.²

IX. If therefore those who lived in ancient observances attained unto newness of hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath,³ but living a life ruled by the Lord's day,⁴ whereon our life too had its

¹ The Greek text and Latin version both read 'His Eternal Word, not coming forth from silence.' The reading translated is that of the Armenian Version, which though translated from the Syriac, is ultimately derived from a very ancient Greek text. It occurs also in the earliest known quotation of these words by Severus of Antioch (c. 513—518). It suits the context better than the other reading, pointing a contrast with the preceding phrases, and it agrees with Ignatius' language elsewhere (cf. Eph. 19). Lightfoot thinks that the other reading was due to an alteration of the text in the fourth century. Both the Gnostics and Marcellus used language of the Divine generation of the Son similar to that of Ignatius. But the resemblance is only apparent, as the context shows that Ignatius is speaking of the coming forth of the Word in the Incarnation, and the question of the pre-existence of the Word does not come within the scope of the passage.

² Cf. John viii. 29.

³ Cf. Coloss. ii. 16. They are not to fall back into a Jewish mode of life, represented here by the Sabbatical observances of the Judaistic party.

⁴ *i.e.* living in the hopes and memories which the day inspires as the commemoration of Christ's Resurrection. There is a contrast between the formal observance of the Sabbath and the new spirit which marked the Christian

rising through Him and His death—which¹ some deny, a mystery through which we have received the power to believe, and therefore we endure, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Teacher—how shall we be able to live apart from Him?² For the prophets also became His disciples, and awaited in the spirit His coming to teach them. And therefore He, for Whom they rightly waited, came and raised them from the dead.³

X. Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His

observance of the weekly festival of the Resurrection. For ‘the Lord’s day,’ cf. *Barnabas*, 15. ‘We keep the eighth day for rejoicing, in the which also Jesus rose from the dead, and having been manifested ascended into the Heavens.’

¹ The passage ‘which . . . our only teacher’ is perhaps best taken, with Zahn, as a parenthesis. It is a passing allusion to the Docetæ. In letters so closely connected in point of time as the Ignatian Epistles, it is only natural that the writer should show signs of the thoughts which were engaging his attention at the time. The danger arising from Docetism gives a certain colouring to the whole language of Ignatius upon the Passion of Christ, even where he is not directly assailing the error.

² Cf. c. 10 and Philad. 8, 9.

³ The belief in the descent of Christ into Hades and His preaching there, based probably upon the passage 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, was widespread in the second and third centuries, and was accepted by the heretic Marcion (Iren. I. 27, 2). The clause ‘He descended into Hell’ is not found in any baptismal creed before that of Aquileia, quoted by Rufinus, *circa* 400 A.D., though it may go back much earlier (Swete, *Apostles’ Creed*, pp. 61, 62). A similar clause is found in the Dated Creed of Sirmium in 359 A.D.

kindness. For if He should follow us in acting according to our acts, we are indeed undone. Therefore, becoming His disciples, let us learn to live in a way befitting Christianity. For he who is called by any other name besides this, is not of God. Lay aside, then, the evil leaven¹ which has become stale² and bitter, and turn to the new leaven,³ which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him,⁴ that no one among you wax corrupt, for by your savour you shall be proved. It is outrageous to utter the name of Jesus Christ and live in Judaism. For Christianity believed not in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity, in which people of every tongue believed and were gathered unto God.

XI. I write not this, my beloved, because I have learned that some of you are in such evil case, but as one who is less than you, I desire to put you on your guard that you fall not into the snares of vain teaching, but be fully convinced of⁵ the birth and passion and resurrection, which came to pass in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate⁶—

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. v. 7. ² Cf. for the idea, Heb. viii. 13.

³ Matt. xiii. 33, Luke xiii. 21.

⁴ Matt. v. 13, Mark ix. 50, Luke xiv. 34. Cf. Lev. ii. 13.

⁵ This confession, couched in an anti-Docetic form, may indicate that Ignatius feared the danger of Docetism at Magnesia. Or possibly he is thinking of the dangers threatening other churches, and so gives an anticipatory warning to the Magnesians.

⁶ The date of the Crucifixion is inserted here, as in the Creed, in order to emphasize the historical truth of the

events which truly and certainly were brought to pass by Jesus Christ, our Hope, from which Hope may none of you ever go astray.

XII. May I have joy of you in all things, if I be worthy. For even though I am a prisoner, I am nothing in comparison with one of you who are free. I know that you are not puffed up, for you have Jesus Christ within yourselves.¹ And I know that when I praise you, you feel the greater shame, for it is written, '*The righteous man is his own accuser.*'²

XIII. Be diligent therefore to be confirmed in the decrees³ of the Lord and the Apostles, that in everything, which you do, you may be prospered⁴ in flesh and spirit, by faith and love, in the Son and Father and in the Spirit,⁵ in the beginning and in the end, along with your bishop who is worthy of all honour, and the fitly-woven spiritual coronal⁶ of your presbytery, and the deacons who are according to the mind of God. Submit yourselves to the bishop and to one another, as Jesus

fact, and connect it with the general history of the period. Tacitus, in his account of the Christians, mentions Pilate (*Ann. xv. 44*).

¹ Cf. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Prov. xviii. 17. LXX. The Hebrew gives quite a different sense.

³ The word for 'decrees' occurs in Acts xvi. 4.

⁴ An allusion to Ps. i. 3. LXX.

⁵ For the order, cf. 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

⁶ See note on c. 6.

Christ [was subject] to the Father [after the flesh], and the Apostles to Christ and the Father, that there may be union both of flesh and spirit.¹

XIV. Knowing that you are full of God, I have exhorted you briefly. Remember me in your prayers, that I may attain unto God. Remember too the Church which is in Syria, whereof I am not worthy to be called a member. For I have need of your united prayer in God, and your love, that the Church in Syria may be granted the refreshing dew of your fervent supplication.

XV. The Ephesians from Smyrna salute you, whence also I am writing to you, for they have come hither for God's glory, even as yourselves. In every way they have refreshed me, with Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. The rest of the churches, too, salute you in the honour which is of Jesus Christ. Farewell in godly peace, keeping a steadfast spirit, which² is Jesus Christ.

¹ Cf. c. 1 (note), and see Introd. § 4.

² The relative probably refers to the whole clause and the idea of concord prominent in it.

III. THE EPISTLE TO THE TRALLIANS

[Tralles was situated on the high-road which passes from Ephesus through Magnesia and Laodicea to the East. It was about seventeen or eighteen miles from Magnesia, which is almost midway between Ephesus and Tralles. Like Magnesia, Tralles probably owed its Christianity to the preaching of St. Paul's disciples. The Trallians had sent their bishop to meet Ignatius at Smyrna, and he writes to thank them. He takes occasion to warn them against false teaching and separatism, without, however, accusing them personally of these errors. The main part of the epistle (cc. 6—11) contains a strong protest against a Docetic error, of which we see a more strongly-developed form in the heresy attacked in the Epistle to the Smyrnæans. At the same time he urges upon them the duty of outward unity and obedience to their Church officers, as their best security against error. Of special interest in this connection is c. 7. There is no mention of the Judaic error condemned in the Epistle to the Magnesians.]

IGNATIUS, who is also Theophorus, to her that is beloved by God, the Father of Jesus Christ, to the holy Church which is at Tralles in Asia,¹ elect and worthy of God, having peace in flesh and spirit²

¹ *i.e.* the Roman province of Asia.

² The text is in some confusion, the Greek text and Armenian Versions reading ‘blood’ for ‘spirit.’ Probably, how-

through the passion of Jesus Christ, Who is our hope through the resurrection unto Him ; which Church I salute in the fulness of God, after the Apostolic manner,¹ and bid it heartiest greeting.

I. I have learned that you exhibit a mind, which is blameless and unwavering in patient endurance, not from habit but naturally. For so your bishop, Polybius, has informed me, who by the will of God and Jesus Christ has been with me at Smyrna, and has so greatly shared my joy in my bonds in Christ Jesus, that in him I beheld your whole number. So then I welcomed your godly kindness manifested through him, and gave glory to God, when I found you to be, as I had learned, followers of God.

II. For whenever you are subject to the bishop as unto Jesus Christ, you appear to me to be living not the ordinary life of men, but after the manner of the life of Jesus Christ,² Who died for our sakes, that believing in His death you might escape death. It is necessary therefore that you should act, as indeed you do, in nothing without the bishop. But be subject also to the presbytery,³ as

ever, the longer Greek recension has preserved the correct reading, ‘spirit.’ The Armenian version omits ‘through the passion.’ This would give the sense ‘being at peace through faith in, and union with, the flesh and spirit of Jesus Christ.

¹ *i. e.* in the Apostolic epistles.

² Cf. Magn. 7.

³ On this comparison see note on Magn. 6.

unto the Apostles of Jesus Christ our Hope. For if we live in Him we shall be found [in Him].¹ Those, too, who are deacons of the mysteries² of Jesus Christ must in every way be pleasing unto all. For they are not deacons of meats and drinks,³ but are servants of the Church of God. So then they must be on their guard against blame⁴ as against fire.

III. In like manner⁵ let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ,⁶ as also the bishop, [regarding him] as a type of the Father,⁷ and the presbyters as the

¹ Lightfoot's reading has been followed.

² This probably refers to their work as teachers, rather than to their assistance at the Eucharist. St. Paul similarly uses 'mystery' in the sense of a revealed truth.' (Cf. e.g. Rom. xvi. 25.) The passage which follows treats of the duties of the deacon's office, not of the respect which is due to him.

³ The original duties of the deacon's office (Acts vi. 2) involved a considerable amount of attention to mere external business, such as the distribution of alms. Yet there was a higher aspect of the office, as from the first we find the deacons engaged in teaching (cf. Acts viii.). It is this higher aspect which Ignatius emphasizes.

⁴ Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 10.

⁵ i.e. there must be mutual consideration. The deacon must regard the people's wishes; the people must respect the deacon's office.

⁶ On this comparison cf. Magn. 6, note. Ignatius is thinking of the relation to the Father of Jesus Christ as Son of Man, 'Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister' (Matt. xx. 28).

⁷ Cf. Magn. 6, note. The whole passage from 'deacons'

Council of God and the band of the Apostles.¹ Without these there is no church deserving of the name.² Concerning these matters I am persuaded that you are thus disposed. For I have received, and still have with me, in the person of your bishop, the pattern of your love. His very demeanour is a striking lesson, and his gentleness is power—a man whom I think even those who are without God revere. It is for love of you that I thus refrain, although I might have spoken of this with greater urgency. But I thought not myself sufficient for this task of enjoining you, condemned man that I am, as though I were an apostle.

IV. I have many thoughts in God. But I keep myself within bounds, that my boasting may not prove my ruin. For now must I needs fear the more, and not give heed unto them that are puffing me up. For they who speak to me³ act as a

to ‘Father’ exhibits great variation of text. In the first clause the Latin Version reads ‘as the commandment of Jesus Christ.’ In place of the word ‘type,’ which is read by the Syrian version and the longer Greek recension, the Greek text and Latin version read ‘Son.’

¹ For the ideas which suggested this twofold comparison of the presbyters, see Magn. 6, note. The word ‘council’ is suggested by the arrangements of the churches in early times, while the word ‘band’ is suggested by the earthly ministry of the Lord and His Apostles.

² On the Ignatian conception of the ministry and the unity of the Church, see Introd. § 4.

³ Ignatius suppresses the flattering words which he fears

scourge to me. For I welcome suffering, yet I know not whether I am worthy. For the envy of Satan is not visible to the eyes of many,¹ but it makes war on me [the more]. I desire therefore gentleness, by which the prince of this world is overthrown.

V. Am I not able to write unto you heavenly things? But I fear lest I may inflict harm upon you, since you are babes.² Indeed bear with me, lest being unable to contain them, you be choked. For even though I am in bonds and am able to understand³ heavenly things and the ordering of angels and the musterings of heavenly rulers, things visible and invisible, yet am I not thereby already a disciple. For we suffer lack of many things, that we may not come short of God.

VI. I urge you therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, use only Christian food, and abstain from strange herbage,⁴ which is heresy. For they even mingle poison⁵ with Jesus Christ, by their false

may ‘puff him up.’ It is possible, however, that some words may have fallen out.

¹ *i. e.* those who were seeking to procure a respite. (Cf. Rom. 7.) ² 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

³ The interest in angelology was a characteristic of the Jews in the apostolic and post-apostolic ages. From them it spread to Judaizing Christians and to Christians generally. Cf. Eph. i. 20, 21, Col. i. 16, ii. 18. Cf. Smyrn. 6.

⁴ Cf. Eph. 10, Philad. 3.

⁵ The text is corrupt. The longer Greek recension suggests the emended reading which has been here translated.

professions of honesty, giving as it were a deadly drug along with honied wine, and he that is ignorant of this fearlessly drinks in death with fatal pleasure.

VII. Be on your guard then against such persons. And this will be, if you are not puffed up, and if you are inseparable from [God, even] Jesus Christ and the bishop and the commandments of the Apostles.¹ He that is within the precincts of the altar² is pure, he that is without the precincts of the altar is not pure. That is, he who acts in anything apart from the bishop and the presbytery and the deacons is not pure in conscience.

VIII. I write not this, because I have learned that any such evil has happened among you, but I

The metaphor is that of a physician who infuses poison into his drugs, and disguises them by giving to them a sweet flavour.

¹ These last words in this connection almost certainly refer to the institution of the episcopate. Lightfoot has shown (*Philippians*, p. 212 sq.) that early tradition supports the view that the establishment of episcopacy in Asia Minor was largely the work of St. John. Irenæus (iii. 3, 4) says of Polycarp that he was appointed by apostles as bishop of the Church in Smyrna, certainly meaning to include St. John in the word ‘apostles.’

² See note Eph. 5. The figure is derived from the Jewish tabernacle or temple. The man who cuts himself off from the congregation of the faithful and the common sacrifices becomes as a Gentile and outcast. (Cf. Matt. xviii. 17.) The congregation is here represented as gathered together under its proper officers.

keep guard over you beforehand, since you are my beloved, and I foresee the snares of the devil. Take up then the armour of gentleness and renew yourselves in faith,¹ which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no one among you have aught against his neighbour. Give not occasion to the heathen, that the godly multitude be not evil spoken of on account of a few foolish men. For '*Woe² unto him through whom My Name is idly blasphemed before some.*'

IX. Stop your ears then when any one speaks unto you apart from Jesus Christ, Who is of the race of David, the child of Mary, Who was truly³ born, and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under

¹ Faith is said to be the flesh of Christ, because it identifies itself with the incarnate Christ, and rests upon the facts of His outward manifestation (cf. Philad. 5). Love is said to be the blood of Christ, because Christ's death and sacrifice are the crowning expression of love, and the life which results from them is a life of love. Cf. Rom. 7. The words 'flesh' and 'blood' are doubtless suggested by the Eucharist both here and in Philad. 5.

² A free quotation of Isaiah lii. 5. The words are quoted in the same form in Polyc., *Phil.* 10.

³ Docetism denied the reality of Christ's human life and sufferings. To these heretics it seemed impossible to believe that God could have come into such close contact with matter as was involved in the Incarnation. Hence the outward, earthly manifestation of Christ was explained away as an apparition. This explains Ignatius' insistence on the reality of the birth, passion and resurrection of the Lord. The word 'truly' is a watchword in this connection. (See Add. Note 1, vol. ii.)

Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, before the eyes of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth;¹ Who also was truly raised from the dead, since His Father raised Him up, Who in like manner will also raise up us who believe on Him—even His Father will raise us in Christ Jesus, apart from Whom we have not that life, which is life indeed.

X. But if it be, as some godless men, that is, unbelievers, assert, that He suffered in semblance—it is they who are semblance²—why am I in bonds? Why moreover do I pray that I may fight with the wild beasts?³ Then I die for naught. Then I lie against the Lord.

XI. Flee therefore those evil offshoots which bear deadly fruit, whereof if a man taste, he straightway dies. For these are not a planting of the Father.⁴ For if they were, they would have been seen to be branches of the Cross,⁵ and their fruit would

¹ Cf. Phil. ii. 10.

² Cf. Smyrn. 2, 4.

³ Cf. I Cor. xv. 32. The whole passage is modelled on St. Paul's words.

⁴ Cf. Matt. xv. 13.

⁵ For the metaphor, cf. Smyrn. 1. ‘The symbolism of the tree of life planted in Paradise, as referring to the Cross of Christ, dates from a very early time.’—LIGHTFOOT. The language of Rev. xxii. 1, 2, would render the application easy. The fine hymn, attributed to Venantius Fortunatus, ‘Pange lingua gloriosi,’ exhibits the same imagery, and contains an allusion to the tradition that the tree from which the Cross was taken sprang from the seed of the Tree of Life.

have been incorruptible. For through His Cross by His Passion He calls us unto Him, being His members. It is not possible then that a head should be born without members,¹ since God promises union, which union is Himself.

XII. I salute you from Smyrna, together with the Churches of God² now present with me, men who have refreshed me in every way both in flesh and spirit. My bonds exhort you, which I wear for Jesus Christ's sake, asking that I may attain unto God. Abide in your concord and in your prayer with one another. For it is meet that you should severally, and especially the presbyters, refresh the bishop to the honour of the Father and [to the honour] of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. I pray that you may give heed to me in love, lest by having written unto you I become a testimony against you. Moreover, pray for me too, for I

De parentis protoplasti
Fraude facta condolens,
Quando pomi noxialis
Morsu in mortem corruit,
Ipse lignum tunc notavit
Damna ligni ut solveret.

¹ The denial of the Passion by these heretics cut them off from Christ and from the Divine ideal of unity appointed by God through the Cross. Ignatius is full of the thought and language of St. Paul, and especially of the Epistle to the Ephesians. (Cf. also John xvii. 21—23.)

² i. e. present in the persons of their representatives. (Cf. Eph. 1, Magn. 2.)

have need of your love in the mercy of God, that I may be deemed worthy of the lot which I eagerly press on to attain, that I be not found reprobate.

XIII. The love of the Smyrnæans and the Ephesians salutes you. Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, whereof I am not worthy to be called a member, since I am the very last of them. Farewell in Jesus Christ, submitting to the bishop as unto the commandment,¹ likewise also to the presbytery, and severally love one another with an undivided heart. My spirit devotes itself for you,² not only now but also whenever I attain unto God. For I am still in danger.³ But the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ to fulfil my petition and yours. In Him may we be found blameless.

¹ Used absolutely for God's commandment. They are to obey the bishop as they are to obey God.

² Cf. Eph. 8, note.

³ He still fears that his own weakness, or the efforts of others to procure his respite, may rob him of the martyr's crown.

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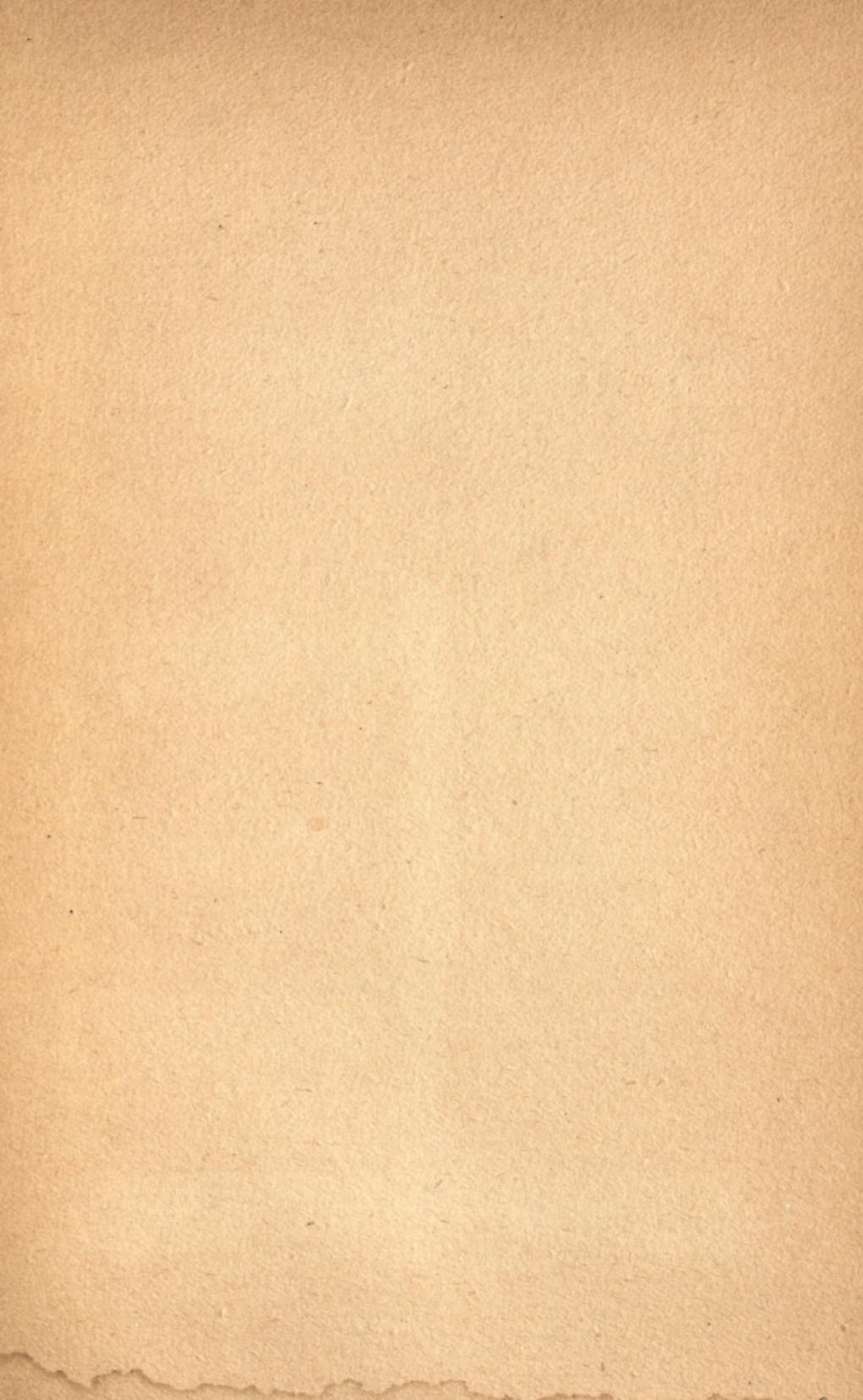
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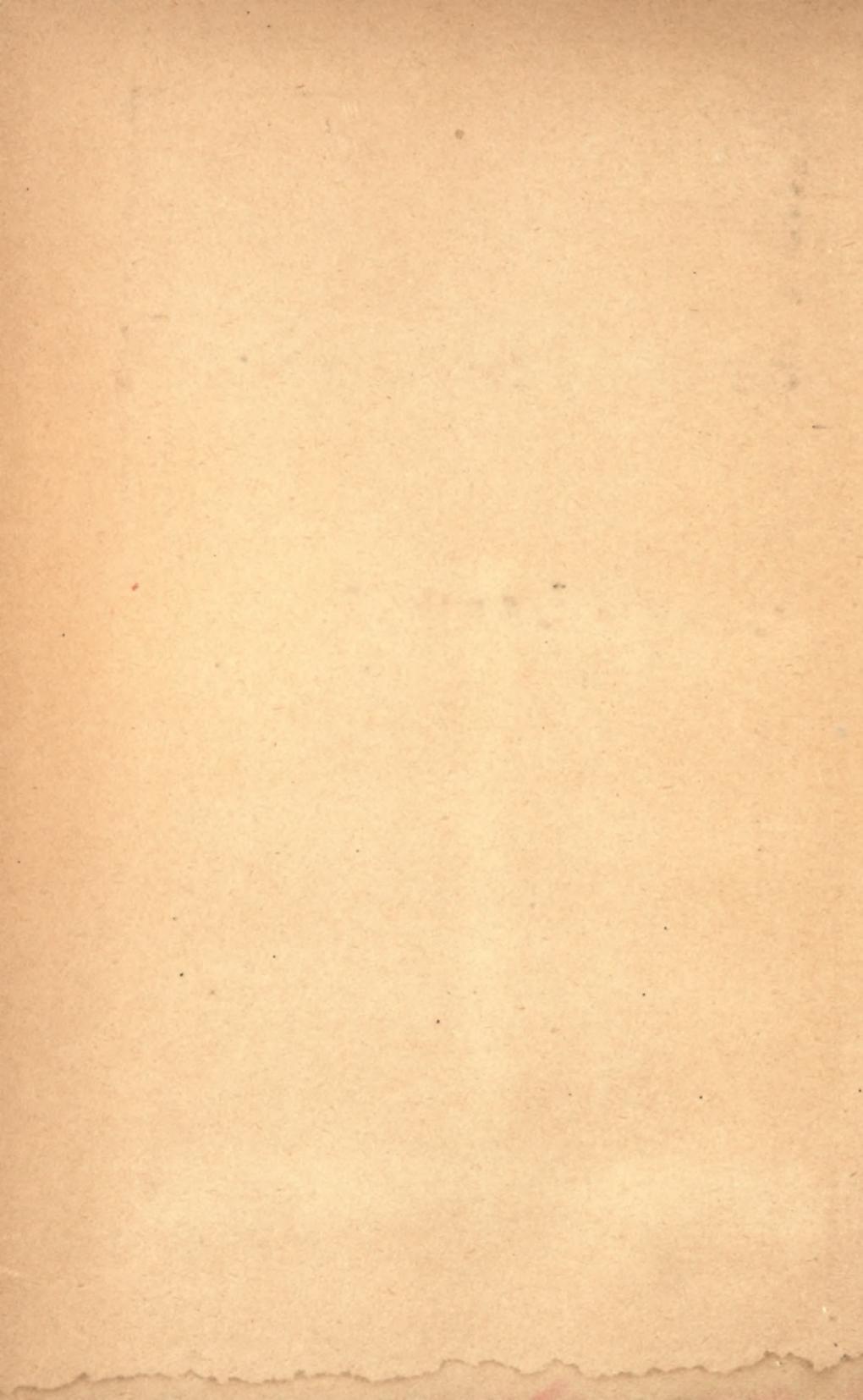
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